

KINGDOM OF MANKON:



Aspects
of History,
Language,
Culture,
Flora and
Fauna

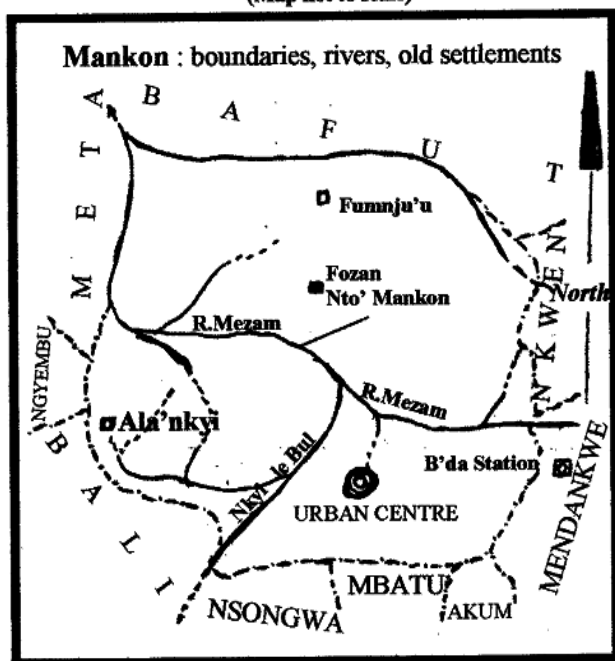
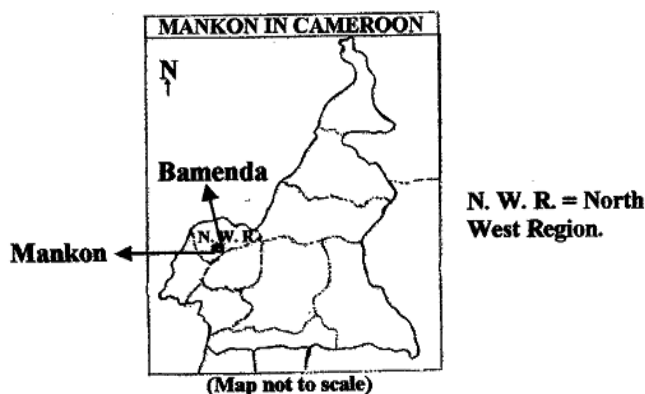
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Kingdom of Mankon

Fig. 1:



KEY

Rivers and streams.....	—
Village boundaries.....	- - -
Old settlements.....	□
Old city centre and traditional capital.....	■
Regional capital ...	▣
Urban Centre	⊙

Kingdom of Mankon

Aspect of History, Language,
Culture, Flora and Fauna

Christopher Che Chi



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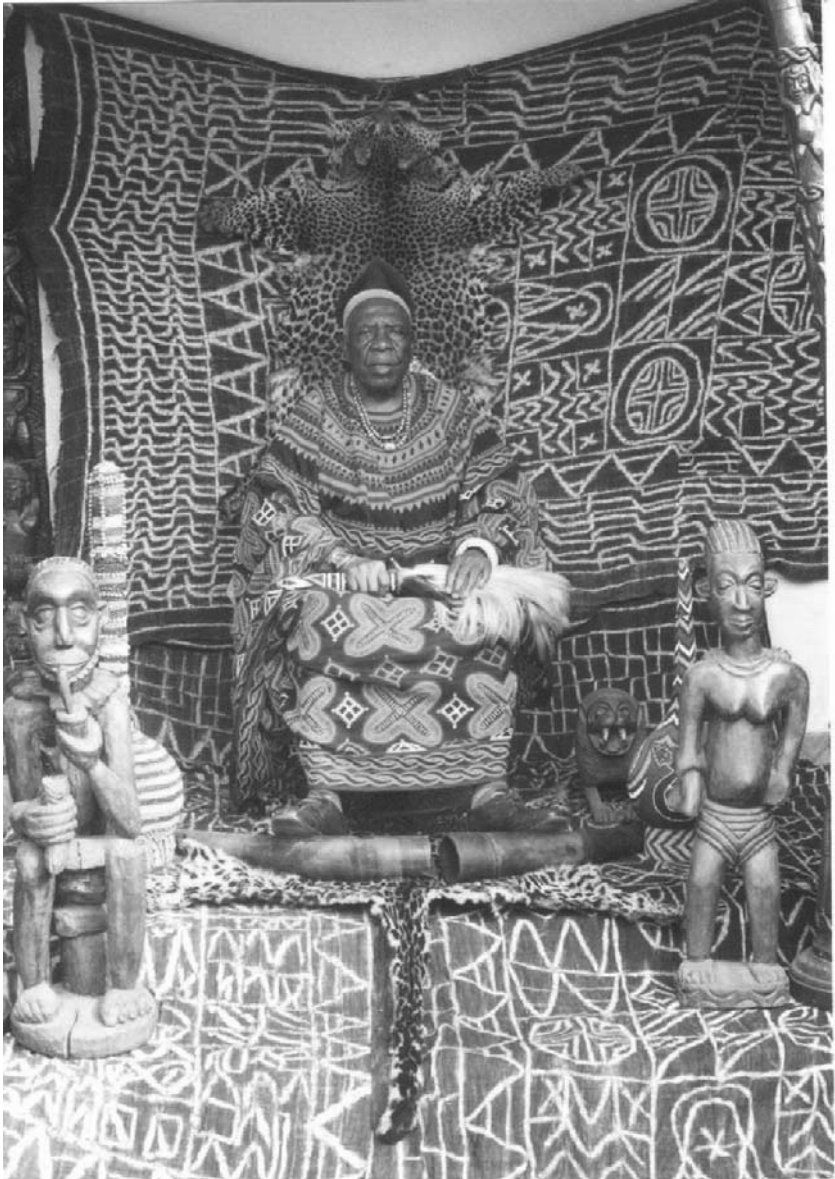
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His Royal Highness Fo Solomon Anyeghamoti Ndefru Angwa'fo III of Mankon; 20th King of the Mankon dynasty (1959 —————).

Agronomist, politician and great developer.

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Signs and sounds used in this book

A) Signs:

Sing.	→ Singular
Plur.	→ Plural
O. (dir. / ind.)	→ Object (direct or indirect)
P.	→ Phrase
Pred.	→ Predicate
N.	→ Noun
S.	→ Subject
V.	→ Verb
Adj.	→ Adjective
Adv.	→ Adverb
Eng.	→ English
NP	→ Noun Phrase
VP	→ Verb Phrase
[]	→ encloses a phonetic sound
/ /	→ encloses a phonemic sound
´	→ high tone
`	→ low tone
ˆ	→ falling tone
˘	→ rising tone
ə̃	→ nasalised vowel
↓	→ <i>downstep</i>
↑	→ <i>upstep</i>
˩	→ floating tone
H	→ floating high
L	→ floating low

NB: The **bold print** represents the spelling (orthographic) form of the word.

B) Sounds (Mankon sounds compared to English sounds)¹:

Table 1: Consonants.

Phonetic representation			Phonemic representation (Graphemes)		Examples	
N°	Mankon	Eng.	Mankon	Eng.	Mankon	Eng.
1	b	b	b	b	à ̣ baré (mad person)	ḅat
2	m	m	m	m	món (child/baby)	ṃan
3	f	f	f	f	fú(ə) ² (rat)	f̣ish
4	v ³	v	v	v	vùŋə (bat)	ṿery
5	t ⁴	t	t	t	táre (three)	ṭin
6	d	d	d	d	n̄d̄iŋi(-ə) ⁵ (eye)	ḍouble
7	n	n	n	n	ànar̄i(ə)/ànal̄i(-ə) ⁶ (sloth)	n̄ame
8	r	r	r	r	kárə(-i) (stingy)	ṛain
9	l	l	l	l	n̄l̄l̄úŋu(-ə) (spoon)	ḷow
10	s	s	s	s	s̄iŋ(ə) (bird)	ṣing
11	z	z	z	z	àz̄úŋu(-ə) (yam)	l̄azy
12	y	j	y	j	ȳiŋá! ⁷ (come!)	ỵam
13	k ⁸	k	k	k	k̄k̄k̄ (jigger)	ḳettle
14	g	g	g	g	ntúgə (six)	g̣ain
15	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	nt̄ʔ̄ (palace)	Cockney speech e.g.

						'bottle'
16	w	w	w	w	wàrə (kite)	wing
17	tʃ	tʃ	tʃ	tʃ	àtʃúʔu(-ə) (fufu)	church
18	dʒ	dʒ	dʒ	dʒ	àtám adʒi (football)	John
19	ŋ	–	ŋ	–	fán(ə) (big)	ring
20	ɣ	–	ɣ	–	nɣam(ə) (speech/ language)	–
21	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	ʔíú(ə) (fish)	shoe
22	ʒ	ʒ	ʒ	ʒ	ʒí(-ɛ) ⁹ (his/hers)	pleasure
23	bv ¹⁰	–	bv	–	ʔbvú(ə) (sin)	–
24	ts	ts	ts	ts	àtséʔɛ (cloth)	ants
25	dʒ	dʒ	dʒ	dʒ	àdzɔŋ(ə) (giant)	sounds
26	kw	–	kw	–	kwiŋə (drum)	–
27	kf ¹¹	–	kf	–	kfúru(-ə) (eat)	–
28	gv	–	gv	–	àgvú(ə) (ash; hearth)	–
29	lv	–	lv	–	nɣlvun(ə) (old- age)	–
30	ɲ	–	ɲ	–	ɲàm(ə) (meat/animal)	–
31	by	–	by	–	býé (rotten)	–
32	tʃw	–	tʃw	–	tʃwâ! (hold!)	–
33	dʒw	–	dʒw	–	dʒwí(ə) (give birth to)	–
34	tʃ	–	tʃ	–	tʃú(ə) (to pay)	–
35	dv	–	dv	–	dvùn(ə) (uproot)	–
36	lw	–	lw	–	mɣlwi (anger)	–
37	tw	tw	tw	tw	twéʔɛ (poke)	twin
38	vw	–	vw	–	nɣvwó (death)	–

39	mb	–	mb	–	<u>mbô</u> (hands)	–
40	nd	–	nd	–	<u>ndàbə</u> (trap)	–
41	ndʒ	–	ndʒ	–	<u>ndʒi(ə)</u> (hunger)	–
42	nt	–	nt	–	<u>ntáʔa</u> (hill)	–
43	ŋg	–	ŋg	–	<u>ŋgári(–ə)</u> (gun)	–
44	ŋk	–	ŋk	–	<u>ŋkàbə(–i)</u> (cap)	–
45	ŋw	–	ŋw	–	<u>ŋwàrɪ(–ə)</u> (pinch)	–
46	ʃw	–	ʃw	–	<u>ʃwàʔa</u> (blade)	–
47	mbv	–	mbv	–	<u>mbvó</u> (hole)	–
48	mby	–	mby	–	<u>mbyí(ɛ)</u> (goat)	–
49	mpf	–	mpf	–	<u>mpfú(ə)</u> (ghost/devil)	–
50	ntʃw	–	ntʃw	–	<u>ntʃwì(ə)</u> (corn/maize)	–
51	ndv	–	ndv	–	<u>ndvún(ə)</u> (uproot)	–
52	ndz	–	ndz	–	<u>ndzàm(ə)</u> (axe)	<u>sounds</u>
53	ndʒw	–	ndʒw	–	<u>ndʒwí(ə)</u> (day)	–
54	ntf	–	ntf	–	<u>ntfù(ə)</u> (adult penis)	–
55	nts	nts	nts	nts	<u>ntsáʔa</u> (‘refuse/dirt)	<u>ants</u>
56	ntw	–	ntw	–	<u>ntwáʔa ntsû</u> (to smack one’s lips)	–
57	ŋgv	–	ŋgv	–	<u>ŋgvó</u> (dog)	–
58	ŋgw	–	ŋgw	–	<u>ŋgwèghɪ(–ə)</u> (family)	–
59	ŋgy	–	ŋgy	–	<u>ŋgyâ</u> (elder)	–
60	ŋkw	–	ŋkw	–	<u>ŋkwìŋə</u> (hill)	–
61	ŋky	–	ŋky	–	<u>ŋkyí(ɛ)</u> (water)	–

Table 2: Vowels

i	i	i	i	mbyí(ɛ)(goat)	pín
e	e	e	e	màngyɛ́ (woman)	mén
ɛ	ɛ	ɛ	ɛ	àlém(ə) (blood)	tén
ɨ	ɨ	ɨ	ɨ	àbɨŋ(ə) (dance)	category
ə	ə	ə	ə	àfərə (play)	teacher
a	–	a	–	àmbõ (banana)	–
ɔ	ɔ	ɔ	ɔ	ngòʔɔ (stone)	gone
o	əu	o	əu	ŋwó (person)	toe
u	u	u	u	àzúm(ə) (thing)	moon

Notes

- 1 For detailed analyses, refer to Chapter Two
- 2 Many Mankon nouns (open nucleic or not which do not end with a schwa already) retain or drop the final schwa depending on the environment where they are used. When used in citation form or at the end of constructs, the final schwa is obligatory. But when the noun is used in the middle of a construct, before a following word that begins with a vowel and in the interrogative or declarative forms the final schwa drops. E.g: (1) **fúə** (rat); (2) **Fú wa me** (Where is the rat?); (3) **Mà kó fuə** (I have caught a rat/mouse.)
- 3 The English have this sound in words like van, very, village, vote, every, give, etc. However, the combination [(-)vu-] is never possible in English. Conversely, Mankon has the [(-)vu-] combination but does not have the [(-)va-], [(-)vɛ-], [(-)vi-] and ((-)vo-) combinations. If we shut both our ears tightly with both palms and pronounce the English words: van, very, village and

vote above, and also attempt the pronunciation of a Mankon word that has the syllable [(-)vu-], we will perceive a marked difference between the English [v] and the Mankon [v]. The latter is tenser and terribly more vibrant than its English counterpart tending towards something like (vb) or [v].

- 4 There are two realisations of this sound: the non-aspirated [t] and the aspirated [th] as in **thí'ó** (late).
- 5 Some Mankon morphemes (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc) end in either **-í** or **-ə** depending on the environment, but the meaning of the word in question remains the same. The lexeme is spelt with final **-ə** in citation form, at the end of a construct or when the word following starts with an [a] whereas it is spelt with final **-í** in the interrogative or declarative forms.
- 6 In Mankon, [l] and [r] are *allophones* (i.e. variants of the same sound), and so are in *free variation* (i.e. one could be used in the place of the other). This allophony is only at C2 position as there is no [r] at C1 position in Mankon except in loans. However, in the case of loans, [r] is invariably replaced by [l] e.g English 'rubber' becomes **loba** in Mankon. See more of allophony at 3.3.
- 7 This verb (**yín'ó**) is used in this way in the imperative, continuous and future forms. It is **yén** elsewhere (perfective).
- 8 There are two realisations of this sound: the non-aspirated [k] and the aspirated [kh] as in **khí(-ə)** (burn).
- 9 Final [i] in citation and declarative forms changes to [ɛ]. It remains unchanged in the interrogative form.
- 10 This sound is realised [gv] and vice versa by some speakers in some words.
- 11 This sound is also realised [pf] and vice versa as seen in **kfó** or **pfó** (die).

Preface

This book is a scientific and methodical showcase of language as a medium of cultural transmission. My intention is to poke and provoke thought among researchers: historians, geographers and especially linguists and sociologists to examine and analyse the Mankon sociolinguistic and cultural situation. Our focus will be on the diachronic and synchronic analyses of Mankon language with the aim of documenting it for posterity. Mankon is a Language of Limited Diffusion (LLD) and our concern is that if researchers do not analyse and document it, it will become endangered.

Because the Mankon Language is at its nursery stage of codification and standardisation, there is bound to be a lot of differences and idiosyncrasies in the process. This is normal, for if we recall we will realise the English went through this stage of idiosyncrasy between the 16th and 18th centuries before finally codifying the language they have today. Our ardent and clarion call is for all researchers on Mankon to harness and harmonise their divergences for the interest of the language. Of all the researchers on Mankon Jacqueline Leroy distinguishes herself for her numerous works in the area of phonology, morphology and syntax. We should now move on from these essentially phonological and grammatical analyses to propose a standard orthography for Mankon.

Consequently, in this work we have proposed orthography for Mankon drawing our inspiration from some internationally accepted universals in orthography designs and principles. If this orthography of Mankon is accepted, it could be a springboard in literacy and pedagogical designs that could foster the teaching/learning process of **màṅkon**¹.

Before delving into the actual analysis of the language per se, we felt it imperative to locate aspects of Mankon like geography, history, society, culture, flora and fauna within which a language operates. We all know language does not exist in a vacuum or a void. It exists in the taxonomic nomenclatures we attribute to referents in a particular society. This society now uses these referents in communicative acts in the areas of politics, religion, education, economy, entertainment, etc. This is particularly important because sociolinguists and *ethnolinguists* in language and culture believe in some cultural and linguistic ‘relativity’ whereby

.... the language of a particular society is an integral part of its culture, and the lexical distinction drawn by each language will tend to reflect objects, institutions and activities in the society in which the language operates (Lyons, 1968: 432).

Furthermore, background study is important as

...in oral literature, it is very difficult indeed to understand some features if one does not know beforehand the background from which they spring (Tcheho, 1975).

The two authors cited above advocate the fact that language ties with society; so, to understand better the Mankon Language, it is important to know the milieu in which it operates. However, to say this is not to be taken to mean the extremism of Benjamin Lee Whorf and Edward Sapir who believe in linguistic ‘determinism’ which subjects man to particular societies with the idea that

The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not the same world with different labels attached (Ibid, P. 432).

The general objectives in any language (e.g. Mankon) pedagogy are to develop both the linguistic/non-communicative as well as the communicative competence in language learning. Consequently, a language analysis should be centred on the skills and structures (linguistic/non-communicative goals) of that language. In tandem with the above assertions, our goal in this book is to analyse both the l-

language and the E-language² of Mankon in order to foster its documentation and *learnability*. When this is done following language universals, this otherwise unknown indigenous and endangered language will be spotlighted to the global world for its richness in cultural values. The *orature*³, which was hitherto handed down by word of mouth, will be preserved in script for future generations.

A study and documentation of the Mankon language and culture preserves the form and showcases it to the world at large. Mankon traditional values are constantly being eroded by the unavoidable necessary evil of urbanisation and globalisation, but we must swim with the tide while preserving that, which is inherent in us. It is a sort of paradox. Jick (2006:29) must have realised this ambivalence when he says ‘man as a “social animal”, is both universal and specific and his products are subsequently universal and specific’. One cannot have one’s cake and eat it.

A work of this magnitude could not have been realised without the assistance of many. I am particularly grateful and indebted to the following persons: the Mankon Language guru – Dr Jacqueline Leroy – who read through the manuscripts and made valuable suggestions, His Royal Highness S.A.N. Angwafo III of Mankon, Princes Che Peter and Che Simon for their advice and my informants: Pa Anye Che Ndi (late), Pa Tabufor Achamukong (late), J.F. Ndefru III (late), Mr Ayah Henry, Pa

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I thank my family: Chi Paschalia Nehlum, Che Tabara Tse Mbuh, Che Ndeh Bu, Che Tsi Na, Che Kien Awah, Aghanwi Akarazah Che and Faith Anyambom for their moral support.

A good deal of the data of proverbs used in this book was collected between 1989 and 1991 by the author for a post-graduate Diploma.

Christopher Che Chi

Notes

- 1 **Màṅkon** is a Lower Ngemba language in the Mbam–Nkam subgroup of the East-*Grassfields* Bantu languages (Leroy 2007 : 4) spoken by the Mankon people in the North–West Region of Cameroon (cf. map at the beginning).
- 2 I-language analysis focuses on the 'internal' micro linguistic form and structure of language from the sound up to the sentence, while E-language deals with the 'external' macro function/discourse of language.

- 3 Talla Kashim (1998:11) states: “When a literary work has been composed orally, performed orally and transmitted orally, it is considered orature”.

Introduction

Kingdom of Mankon: Aspect of History, Language, Culture, Flora and Fauna is a documentary and analytic showcase of the Mankon socio-politico-economic and linguistic landscape. A wealth of cultural, historical, religious, political, geographical, linguistic, etc wisdom exists in Mankon but which hitherto is being passed on “orally from generation to generation” (Jick, 2006:1). This folklore exist in forms such as riddles and jokes, folktales, folk songs and dance, myths and legends, proverbs, arts and crafts, etc. Our fear is that if this “wisdom literature” is not harnessed, analysed and documented for posterity, this ‘metalinguistic knowledge’ (Himmelman 1998: 9) of “little known” Mankon may become ‘endangered’. However, with a thorough linguistic documentation of taxonomies and ‘morphological paradigms’ (Ibid) such as plants, animals, names, expression of numbers and measures, artefacts; social organisation, history, geography as well as aspects of its I-language and E-language, ‘... future generations will have a literary means of sustenance and a full understanding of their roots” (Jick 2006:9). We feel there is an urgent need to boost and revitalise the Mankon Language because it is fast eroding due the following:

- (1) Urbanisation and the cosmopolitan nature of Mankon,

- (2) Linguistic interference (French, English and other contiguous languages),
- (3) Attitudes and language apathy especially by the youths,
- (4) Lack of language contact in the Diaspora (both within and without Cameroon), and
- (5) The current needs of education and globalisation.

In order to realise our objectives of revitalising the Mankon Language, we have adopted the approaches in ‘documentary and descriptive linguistics’ of Himmelmann 1998, Everett 2004, Woodbury 1998, 2003, 2004, 2007 and Foley, 2007. Essentially, language documentation and description according to Himmelmann (1998) are two distinct activities involving on the one hand, the collection, transcription, and translation of ‘primary data’ and on the other, the analysis of such data. The documentary activity leads to ‘language documentation’ and the field of study is ‘documentary linguistics’. The next activity is the synchronic ‘language description’ whose field is ‘descriptive linguistics’. He further argues that

Conventionally, the documentary activity has been seen as ancillary to the descriptive activity (i.e. primary data are collected in order to make a descriptive statement of the language). Conceiving of documentary linguistics as a fairly independent field of linguistic inquiry means viewing the

descriptive activity as ancillary to the documentary activity (i.e. descriptive techniques are part of a broad set of techniques applied in compiling and presenting a useful and representative corpus of primary documents of the linguistic practices found in a given speech community).P.2.

We deduce from Himmelmann's analysis that documentary and descriptive linguistics are two sides to a coin: in order to analyse, we must collect and after analysis, we have to document i.e. store for future use. The two are inter-dependent. We are going to use the two in the analysis of Mankon.

The field methodologies used in this work are:

- Elicitation of verbal (linguistic) communicative acts through interviews and questioning.
- Tape-recording of verbal (linguistic) communicative acts through interviewing or simply recording a speech event in action.
- Photographing of non-verbal (non- linguistic) events.
- Consulting any relevant documented material.

A fifth method of data collection which is rather bourgeois and where equipment are difficult to procure would have been through video-taping and computing of both linguistic and non-linguistic staged communicative events like rituals, pantomime, etc. However, we made use of

the feasible resources at our disposal. In the cases of rituals and incantations, we described the ritualistic or *incantative* paraphernalia and transcribed the accompanying words on the spot. The data collected on the field were then transcribed and a gloss provided before analysis. Several of the methodologies used are shared by Foley (2007) when he says:

A common language may be used in simply asking questions, or recordings may be made of common discourse genres, played back and transcribed. An example of the minimal approach without a common language is the use of gesture and pantomime in an equipment free situation. Locally available props may be used, of course, but the main stimuli proceed directly from the investigator. More contextualized elicitation may take place by, for example, participating in and recording local activities and events, which in turn could be videotaped and serve as further stimuli, even for checking on reliability, a particular concern in eliciting endangered languages (Foley, 2007:1).

Any language documentation and description is never laid on a bed of roses. There are always inherent problems. One of the problems we faced in this work was the lack of funds and the appropriate equipment. The other was the hindrance of taboos and restrictive

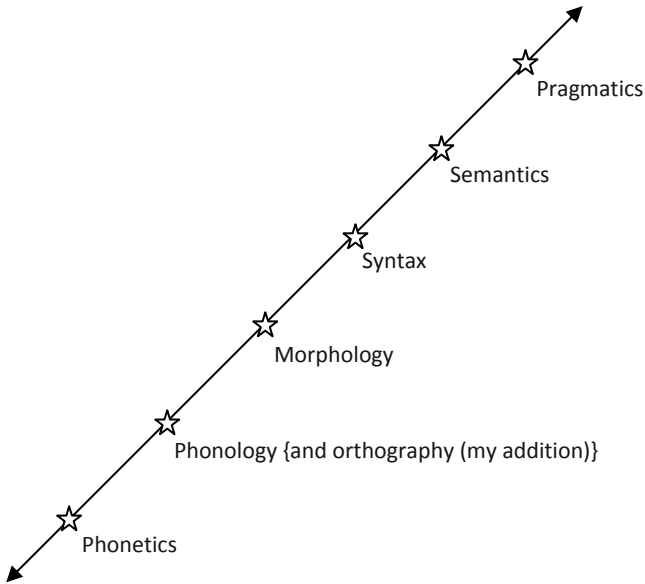
societies. For example, though a native, this writer could not access certain shrines and the performances there or know more of the activities of the *Kwi'fo*¹ and the *Fo*².

Furthermore, there was this conflict (as Steven Bird noted in 2001 in his study of Dschang language) between the native educated linguist and the native uneducated connoisseur of the linguistic repertoire who is reticent (for various reasons) to give information to the linguist. However, fortunately for the writer, he knows the language and the culture. This knowledge eased his collection and analysis. The last problem is that of translation unreliability. Remember, the French say “traduire c’est trahir”.

Linguistic structure

For us to appreciate better the linguistic concepts used in this book, it would be worthwhile explaining some key general language aspects.

According to LINGUALINKS LIBRARY by SIL International, 2003, language is constituted as below:



The 2005 OECD–CERI³ linguistics workshop report provides the following working definitions to the first three linguistic terms:

- 1) **Phonetics** is “the physical production and perception of sounds of speech”. (There are three types of phonetics: *articulatory*, acoustic and auditory.)
- 2) **Phonology** “describes the way sounds function within a given language or across languages”.
- 3) **Orthography** is “the set of rules about how to write correctly in the writing system of a language”.

- 4) **Morphology** is “a subfield of linguistics that studies word structure and deals with word structure rules across as many languages as possible”.

Yule (1985:80) states:

- 5) “If we concentrate on the structure and ordering of components within a sentence, we are studying what is technically known as the **syntax** of a language”. He again on p.91 concludes:
- 6) “Generally, work in **semantics** deals with the description of word–and sentence–meaning” and
- 7) “...in **pragmatics**, (work deals) with the characterization of speaker–meaning”.

Fox & Menendez–Benito (2006) corroborate with Yule in defining pragmatics as the “study of other things that might influence meaning besides the semantic system”.

All over the years, there have been divergences in the approaches to language (e.g. English) teaching/learning. Proponents of the structural approach (*structuralists*) lay emphasis on the appropriateness of the ordered rules and form of the language. Advocates of the communicative functional approach argue that one can communicate even with substandard grammar for situations like context enable one to pass across some form of message. These antagonists draw a demarcation line between I–language and E–language. The ‘swing of the pendulum’ in the two approaches continued until recently when the

‘eclectic/integrative’ approach was devised which somewhat resolves the conflict between the two approaches. The eclectic/integrative method in language pedagogy fuses the paradigmatic, syntactic and functional matrices⁴ in language use for an utterance to be considered appropriate and “well-formed”. In this bid, we agree with David Williams (1990:69) that

In the traditional structural approach..., language is taught mainly in terms of phonological, grammatical and lexical structures. In concentrating on language forms, the structural approach stops short of doing justice to the functions of language for purposes of social interaction.

This is why we strongly feel in order for us to analyse the non-linguistic aspects: proverbs, myths and legends, rituals, song and dance, history, politics, economy, flora and fauna, etc of this book, we must first and foremost review the structure of the Mankon language. We totally agree with George Yule (1985: ix) that

By the end of this book, you should feel that you do know quite a lot about both the internal structure of language in human life (its function), and also that you are ready to ask a lot of the kinds of questions that professional linguists ask.

Mankon Language processing and boosting

A/ Language documentation (1):

- ⇒ the collection of primary data.
- ⇒ the transcription of such data.
- ⇒ the translation of the data.

B/ Language description

I-language: analysis of structure and form.

E-language: function of language.

C/ Language documentation (2): storage of language in any retrieval system e.g. books and computer, etc.

D/ Language pedagogy:

- ⇒ through teaching projects
- ⇒ through workshops
- ⇒ through conferences
- ⇒ through seminars

Chapter One of this book examines the geographical and historical setting of Mankon to situate it in time and space. In Chapter Two, the political, economic and social structure of Mankon is treated. In Chapter Three, the phonetics and phonology (see Foley 2007) of Mankon are treated as well as the orthography proposed. In chapter Four, we examine Mankon morphology by treating such language areas like noun classes, *asyntactic* and syntactic⁵ structures just to name these few. Chapters Five, Six and Seven are the

nuclei of the work. Because the proverb is in sentence form, we feel an examination of its meaning (semantics), syntactic structure and function must replicate the whole system of the Mankon Language. The proverb because of its “popularity, brevity, piquancy and adoption by the people”, (Jick, 2006:14) could be a microcosm of the Mankon I-Language and E-Language. Chapter Eight continues to treat discourse that we started in Chapter Seven but this time beyond the sentence, by examining myths and legends, folk songs and lullabies. Day-to-day practical needs close up the discussion in an appendix.

Christopher Che Chi

Notes

- 1 This is a secret, male exclusive and regulatory society in Mankon.
- 2 *Fo* is the Mankon word for ‘King’, also called *Fon* in other *Fondoms* (Kingdoms) of the *Grassfields* Regions of Cameroon.
- 3 Workshop theme was *LEARNING SCIENCES AND BRAIN RESEARCH: Shallow vs. Non-shallow Orthographies and Learning to Read*. This was a joint workshop organized by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) hosted by Cambridge University. The workshop brought together world eminent experts at linguistics.
- 4 The ‘paradigmatic’ and ‘syntagmatic’ (syntactic) relations in linguistics/grammar refer respectively to the ‘vertical’ and ‘horizontal’ paradigms in sentence construction vis-à-vis meaning and appropriateness in social context. In English, for example, a sentence: *John is older than his father* will be

'syntagmatically' correct but 'paradigmatically' odd. See also Yule's (1985: 93) i. *The hamburger ate the man*, ii. *My cat studied linguistics*, and iii. *A table was listening to some music*, Chomsky's (1957) '*Colorless green ideas sleep furiously*' (in the sun, perhaps); and Hyme's idea of a child who says to his father '*Go away!*'

- 5 In the normal order of linguistic analysis, syntax comes before semantics, but for practical reasons, we have treated meaning before the structure of the proverbs. This is because in documentary and descriptive linguistics, the documentary activity (collection) precedes the descriptive activity (analysis). The collection activity involves other activities like transcription, and translation. Translation in this context means a gloss i.e. explanation and meaning are provided before analysis takes place.

Chapter One

Mankon geographical location and history

1.1. Origin of the word “Mankon”

J.F. Ndefru III (late)¹ holds the view that “Mankon” means “mother wave” because the Mankon people in one of their migratory movements under their first ruler *Fo Ndemagha’a I* moved in a large **mâ-** (mother) –**ɲkòn** (wave).

Kingmaker and Mankon cultural virtuoso, Pa Anye Che Ndi (late) holds that at one point of the migration, *Fo Ndemagha’a I* turned and exclaimed “**ɔ̃** **mâ-ɲkòn**”. (“**ɔ̃**” is an exclamation word; “**mâ-**” means ‘mother’ but in this context it means ‘large’; “**-ɲkòn**” means ‘tail’.) He was so much excited by the large following behind him that he considered himself a very big animal whose tail was the massive crowd that trailed in Indian file behind him. (Needless to recall that in this culture, we know the greatness of someone by the massive following they have.)

Whatever the case, the two Mankon cultural epitomes above share the view that “Mankon” originated from the large wave of movement behind *Fo Ndemagha’a I* during one of their migrations. It should be noted here that “Mankon” is also called “Bandoe, Bande, or Bandeng” (Leroy 1977), as spelt variously by colonisers. **Ba-** means “the people of” or “those of”. **-ndoe**, **-nde** or **-ndeng** is a coinage following the Mankon first leader – *Fo Ndemagha’a I*. In short, Mankon, Bandoe, Bande, Bandeng means “the people of” or “those of” *Fo Ndemagha’a I*.

1.2. Geographical setting

Mankon, an almost spherical land (see map on p. 2) of about 20km in diameter, lies about 1000m above sea level and situated below the Bamenda Escarpment. Mankon is one of the many villages of the North West Region of Cameroon that form the Bamenda Plateau. The River Mezam runs through much of Mankon land, until it forms a natural boundary between Mankon and Meta. On the East, it is bounded by the **m̃f̃ig** (Bamenda Escarpment) and the villages of Mendankwe and Nkwen; in the North by Bafut; in the West by Meta, Ngyembu and Bali; and in the South by Mbatu and Nsongwa.

By the end of the 19th century, 5,000 people (LEROY 1977:13) occupied the land. EBALA and AKA, 1984:9 estimated the population at 29,136. Today, the population is estimated at 60,000 inhabitants (Leroy 2007:2).

So many hills – **m̃ntáʔa** (sing: **ntáʔa**) – are dotted all over Mankon, the highest of which is Nta'atabien (1.338m above sea level). Other small hills are named after events, things and wards that occupy them: Nta'angub, (**ŋgúb** = poultry. The first poultry farm in Mankon was built on this hill), Nta'angu, Nta'atiton, Nta'ango', Nta'a-kimbari, Nta'abeng, etc. The rock types are mainly basalt (**k̃ʔʔ**), granite (**ŋg̃ʔʔ tsû-tsû**), and quartz **ŋg̃ʔʔ fiwé**).

Mankon is watered by many streams that form tributaries of the main River Mezam that takes its rise from the Bamenda Escarpment. These streams, which

include Nkyi Asa'a, Nkyi Ashegha, Nkyi Ba'si, Nkyi Mâfo, etc., take their rises from the knolls that abound Mankon.

The dry and dusty Northeast winds and the wet/damp South-West winds cause the dry and wet seasons that respectively start from October to March. In Mankon, these seasons are sub-divided into four:

- a) *ABUB* is the driest time of the year with the weather very hot during the day (though the mornings and nights are very cold) and lasts from December to February. The air is often dusty and streams dry up. This is the time for housing, fishing, hunting, farm clearing and thatching. (Roofing with aluminium sheets has made thatching nowadays almost obsolete.)
- b) *NTSUBMBENG* is the beginning of the rainy season from February to April or May. Hunting, fishing and housing still continue with an additional hoeing and planting.
- c) *MtGHAM* is the period of heavy rainfall from May to August. Weeding of farms, harvesting of crops and planting of second cycle crops characterise this time. There is freshness and greenness all about.
- d) *fSAN* extends from September to November or December. There is less rainfall then, and flowers turn brown and dry up; grass is collected for thatching.

As Mankon is in the *Grassfields* Regions of Cameroon, one finds mostly tall and short grass in the valleys and on the hills. Occasionally, one may find a few natural trees of the Rain Forest types and man-planted eucalyptus tree forests. Raffia palms and date palms abound in the valleys. Inside these trees and grasses can be found some wild animals like **tɔwì** (hare), **nɛman(ə)** (wildcat), **ndʒɪbnə** (cutting grass), etc. Others existed but were chased out by man's occupation of the land. These animals included **àfon** (leopard), **àngábə** (antelope), **àngwabáʔa** (hyena), **ɛsén** (elephant), etc. Together with these wild animals the **mbyíndɔŋ(ə)** (goat), **mbyíndzɪ(-ə)** (sheep), **kàkfɔnam(ə)** (pig) and **bɛsɪŋ(ə)** (birds) like **ngúb(ə)** (poultry) and **tsɔʔ** (bush-fowl) enhance the Mankon man's diet. **Ngvó** (dog), **búsə(-i)** (cat) and **ɲám-mukarə** (horse) are pets.

1.3. Origin and migration of the people.

In Africa, the major races are the Semites or Hamites, the Negroes, the Semi-Negroes and the Bantus. Of these races, the Semites and the Bantus came from Arabia. The former settled around the Mediterranean Sea where they drove the weaker races and forced them across the Isthmus of the Suez Canal to Africa. These cast-out races trekked into the heart of Africa where drought was not so severe. Some settled mostly in Abyssinia where they traded, interacted and inter-married with the Negroes.

According to oral traditional Mankon history imbued with lots of myths and legends, J.F Ndefru III states that the Mankon people are the descendants of these Hamites, thousands of years ago who migrated in search of food, shelter, trade and commerce:

The forefathers of Mankon are said to have migrated with the expelled group from the present day Middle East (Sa'anyom) carrying with them the Mankon dialect 'Ngoemba' (Ngemba) meaning 'I say'; a dialect said to have been developed in Asia, specifically in China by the Isthmus of the Suez.

"NKAH" – Mankon Students' Association (Ma.S.A) Magazine, 1988:3.

The curious thing is that the settlement of the Mankon people in Sa'anyom (The East) is not known or can be proven, but those who lay claim to this hypothesis buttress their arguments in some coincidental Chinese legacies to Mankon in names like:

Che, Tsay, Tsetu, Tsi, Chi, Fen, Chang, Ntseh, Su'kien etc that tend to resemble such Chinese names as Mao Tse-tung, Chiteng, Chang, Chiang, Tsai Chang, Kuo Feng, Suchen, etc. (Ibid. p.3).

However, Islamic conquests in the North that swept through Egypt, the Sudan or the North Coast of Africa to Central and West Africa forced races to migrate down South. The impact is seen through the Semi-Bantu races that occupy part of Cameroon. This migratory movement of the Bantus reached Cameroon around the 14th or 15th century as far as the Bamiléké region. Linguistic and cultural evidence prove that

the Mankon people are a semi-Bantu race of the Tikar group, said to have come from Tikar as a result of pressures from stronger tribesmen from the North between the 14th and 15th centuries under the leadership of Fo Ndemagha'a I and a number of his successors (EBALLA and AKA, 1984:20).

Their first settlement in Cameroon was around the fertile spots in the Northeastern part of Mbam Plain in the Northeast of Foumban around Tikar. Nevertheless, pressure from Fulbe tribesmen of Tibati appeared to have forced them out of the plain. Movement was in waves and Mankon formed the largest single wave (Cf 1.1).

From Mbam Plain, they moved westwards to present day Wimbun area of Tang, War and Wiya clans of Donga-Mantung Division where they met with other Fulbes of Northern Nigeria. The ensuing battle saw the death of Fo Ndemagha'a II who had succeeded his father. Fo

Ndemagha'a III *alias Minwitingori* took over from him and led the people to Bamumkumbit where they settled for some time before wandering through the Bamiléké regions of Babadjou and Dschang. (It is interesting to note here that another name for the Bamumkumbit people is "Makong" and in their line of kings, they have names like Angwafong I, II and III that resemble the Angwa'fo I, II and III of Mankon). *Fo* Tako'matsi I and *Fo* Ndemagha'a IV ruled between Babadjou and Dschang and *Fo* Tako'matsi II who had succeeded the latter died of malaria due to lots of mosquitoes which together with poor water supply and wild animals, caused the deaths of so many migrants. *Fo* Ndemagha'a V continued the journey.

In Nwe (Bangwa) in present day Fontem, *Fo* Tangwaani succeeded *Fo* Ndemagha'a V who died of **tátu(ə)** (an influenza). Witchcraft practices later forced them out of here and they journeyed northwards to the forest region around Tarinkon² in Widikum. *Fo* Tangwaani led them to this infertile and hostile forest area. It should be recalled here that royal lineage in Mankon at the time was not hereditary as we have today. A *Fo* was chosen following his prowess, bravery and visible contribution to the uplift of the people. This was how *Fo* Ndemagha'a VI *alias Mbangnizhɓ* succeeded *Fo* Tangwaani after a brief temporary vacancy to the throne following the death of the latter. The Mankon people in the forest zone, were chiefly hunters. When they lost *Fo* Tangwaani, they were

looking for an able successor. Each day, after a hunting expedition, the men would sit under trees or go to houses in the neighbourhood to share their game before the hunters dispersed for their various homes. Among the houses in the neighbourhood, one man distinguished himself for his generosity as he each time provided fire, water and other food items to the hunters who would cook some of the meat and food items, eat before going home. One fateful day as they were debating where to go to in order to share their game of the day, one man simply said: “**B̃ɣnə ɣɛ ndʒuʔu mbaŋnɪ ʒɛ**”, meaning, “let us go to that man’s house”, pointing to the house of the man who had been generous to them to the detriment of others who had been stingy. Everybody agreed. While there, they were treated even better than the last time. The man in question was then proposed and enthroned as *Fo* Ndemagha’a VI. After the death of Ndemagha’a VI, *Fo* Tsemagha’a I then led his people to Ala’nkyi⁴ – a very fertile land that abounded with animals of prey. At Ala’nkyi (land of water), a portion of the migrants broke off under the *Fo*’s daughter – Bimagha’a – to found the present day Pinyin. (It is believed she feared the migration that then tended eastwards, could end up again at Sa’anyom where their forebears had many setbacks.) *Fo* Tsemagha’a I and a host of his successors: Ndemagha’a VII, Tsemagha’a II, Ndefru I, Ndemagha’a VIII and Ndefru II reigned, died and were buried at Ala’nkyi that is now the sacred shrine of Mankon.



The sacred shrines at Ala 'hkyi: here lie the seven 'lost' Fos. Each small house entombs and immortalizes a 'lost' Fo (amateur photos).



*In the inner bowels of this forest in the valley below the graves lies the sacred shrine of the **ŋkyimaliʔə**. Instant death awaits any iconoclastic debunker who dares set foot by the sacred mysterious pool. Only the kwi'fo and the Fo know what secrets are buried here. Moreover, no ordinary uninitiated mortal sets foot around the palm bushes surrounding the pool (amateur photos).*

After Ala'nkyi was overexploited, the Mankon people needed more security, more land that is fertile and wider game land and so moved to Fumnju'u under *Fo* Angwa'fo I who took over from *Fo* Ndefru II. Here, they hunted game in the jungles of now Bafut, a few years before the coming of the Bafuts. Before *Fo* Angwa'fo I died, he willed that the headquarters be transferred from Fumnju'u to Fozan (the new capital which he founded). After he died, his body was taken and temporarily buried at Ala'nkyi because Fozan the new site and capital, was still being erected, and they feared burying their *Fo* in Fumnju'u which they were soon to leave; their enemies (at that time, the Bafuts) might exhume him. When the new site was completed, it is believed *Fo* Fomukong who succeeded *Fo* Angwa'fo I (and who led the people to Fozan) exhumed the body at Ala'nkyi and reburied at "Nɛ̃fwim" at the chosen site⁵. Fozan, the present headquarters of Mankon, was and still is ideal because it is flat, fertile and good for animal rearing. It is also good because of its natural defences like the River Mezam in the South and West, a marshy stretch of land and Nta'tabien in the East, and the Mili River in the North. Artificial defence systems like moats that are dug around the capital also safeguard it against its enemies. Throughout the centuries, Mankon had fought a number of wars at Ala'nkyi, Fumnju'u and Fozan (against such neighbours as Bali, Bafut and Nkwen) to safeguard her sovereignty. At Fozan the following *Fos* have ruled: *Fo* Fomukong (1799–1866), *Fo* Angwa'fo II

(1866–1920), Fo Ndefru III (1920–1959) and the present Angwa’fo III (1959—)



Fo Angwafo II (r. 1866-1920)

Great warrior: he fought Dr Zintgraff and the Germans; and defied the British (courtesy Palace archives).



1920-1959)

and developer of hives.)



Fo Angwafo III (r. 1959 —)

Great Agronomist, politician and developer (courtesy Palace archives.)

1.4. The Mankon confederacy.

The Mankon people from Sa'anyon to Fozan moved as a single unit under powerful *Fos* assisted by able and intelligent lieutenants and councillors. In Fozan, they enjoyed some peace that was soon followed by raids and ambushes from within and without. Consequently, a federation was formed among the *ĩtsé* (clans) that made up the Mankon *Fondom*. These clans: Ala'tako', Bandeng, Banyanga, Bikom, Bombi Anyerengum, Bombi Ndesiri, Maso', Mandey, Nto', together with the smaller clans of Mbatu, Ndzong, Mundum I and II, Chomba, Nso'ngwa, Akum and Ala'tening formed themselves in a powerful unit which could resist any external invasion or threats. The Ala'kumas, who separated from the main stream at Babadjou and wandered about, rejoined them at Fozan. This confederacy spoke the same language – Mankon. Due to economic and military prowess enjoyed by the Mankon people, they assimilated the Mbu group made up of present day Mbu (Bafuchu'), Mbei, Ba', Ndza', Ngyembu' and Fomundum (in Bali Sub-division).

The smaller clans that were incorporated, formed sub-chiefdoms, enjoyed a degree of autonomy, and were allowed to trade, hunt and intermarry with the powerful clans. However, they in turn recognised the suzerainty and paramountcy of the Mankon *Fondom* and “certain animals were hunted, plus the skins and tusks of special animals which had to be taken to the palace” (Ma.S.A, 1988:8). The whole confederation had

a central market at Samnɛmandza'a where they all traded and their sub-chiefs took part in the central administration. It was this benevolence as the Mankon *Fondom* grew that the powers and autonomy of the sub-clans continued to dwindle favouring a more centralised type of government.

1.5. Mankon colonial contacts

The peace enjoyed by the Mankon *Fondom* was soon to be perturbed by the advent of colonialism. This *Fondom*, aided by its neighbours, had to fight a number of wars against the Germans because the Mankon people were a set of proud people and did not want being led by the nose by any intruders.

The first of such wars was in January 31, 1891 involving 5 Germans, 300 *Vais* from the coast and 5000 soldiers drawn mostly from Bali-Nyonga and other smaller ally villages, and led by Dr Zintgraff. The war sparked off when Zintgraff established in Bali and sent two of his boys to Mankon to herald his coming to trade with the natives. These boys were killed because "Mankon did not want the Europeans to intervene in the ivory trade in the Bamenda Plateau" (Achu, 1990:88). Zintgraff, therefore, wanted to attack and conquer Mankon and annexe Bafut. This he thought

... if he succeeded to subdue these two powerful states, the whole of Northwest was going to come

under German colonial control. Cheap labour and raw material would also be guaranteed (EBALLA and AKA, 1984:38).

Nevertheless, Mankon and Bafut, in order to safeguard their sovereignty, fought back valiantly when the enemy attacked. The casualties on both sides were enormous, but Zintgraff was defeated and narrowly escaped, badly wounded on the leg⁶, after four Germans, 1680 men on the allied side and 600 on the Mankon side were killed. The Mankon people refused to hand over the beheaded heads of the four Germans killed and so no peace treaty was signed.

The second war took place in August 1895 after the Germans had mustered forces from Monrovia, Calabar, Limbe, and Nkongsamba, armed with more sophisticated weapons than in the first (Ma.S.A, 1988:10). They quickly overran Mankon with little resistance and peace terms were signed, with Mankon supposed to give 22 elephant tusks as war indemnities. These, they refused and a fight ensued in the palace of *Fo Angwa'fo* II who made peace. (A good portion of the palace was destroyed in this battle⁷.)

A third battle was fought in December 1901, when the *Fondoms* of Mankon and Bafut resisted bravely until, led by von Pavel and Captain Glauning, the Germans ruthlessly and bloodlessly vaccinated to death so many Mankon and Bafut people.

Because of these wars and the trouble Mankon had caused the Germans, von Pavel founded the Bamenda Government Station in 1902, and transferred the German headquarters from Bali to this station. This was strategic to overlook and check the strength of Mankon because a powerful fort (which stands to date) was built here making use of forced labour and food for German soldiers from the subdued Mankon (ACHU, 1990:90).



To the left is the fort built on the Bamenda Station hill in 1902 overlooking Mankon to check the advances of her menacing warriors. The Germans used ‘forced labour’ from Mankon. To the right is a cross-section of Mankon town viewed from the Bamenda Station hill (amateur photos).

Following these Mankon sayings:

- a) /Bɛ̃ ʃomə mon da bɛ̃ tsayə be tɛ̃ŋ-ikunə / or
- b) /Bɛ̃ tɪnɪ kyem ntsò la bɛ̃ kɪʔɪ ɪpfu bɛ̃ ʃanə ye/ (proverbs n° 11 and 70; which call for the necessity to reinstate peace no matter what your offender has done to you), the German government in about 1902 recognised the bravery, justice,

integrity and prestige of *Fo Angwa'fo II* of Mankon. He was honoured and decorated with the German tricolour flag, a steel cuirass (armour) of the Prussian guard, an eagle-crested German crown, a portrait of late Kaiser Williams, a sword and four bugles (some of which are still used today by the present *Fo*) or displayed in the Mankon Palace Museum.



Fo Angwafo III of Mankon dons the steel armour of the Prussian Guard and the eagle-crested German crown given to Angwafo II by Kaiser Williams (courtesy Palace archives).

The Mankon *Fondom* was not to enjoy the confederacy forever, as Mbatu, Nso'ngwa, Chomba, Ala'tening and Bafuchu' further migrated to the Bamenda Escarpment and Mundum I and II further moved beyond Bafut. The cause was

that, each ethnic group was allowed to organise hunting expeditions if totemic animals once killed, were given to the dynasty of Mankon. Regrettably, when the Mbatu people caught a leopard, they did not present it to the *Fo* of Mankon. Consequently, the *Kwi'fo* of Mankon arrested the ruler of Mbatu and his nobles. The *Kwi'fo* tried the ruler and his nobles. The severity with which the Mbatu people were ill-treated frightened other innocent groups (Achu, 1990:8) to disperse.

1.6. Migrant settlers in Mankon

The displaced Hausas from the Bamenda Government Station site (cf 1.5.) who had migrated from Northern Nigeria were the first migrant settlers in Mankon. They were awarded a piece of land at Nta'ambagha by *Fo* Angwa'fo II. They were under the authority of the Hausa chief – Sarkin Hausawa (Achu, 1990:61) – and paid no rents to the Mankon *Fo*, but recognised his *paramountcy* and land lordship. The Nta'ambagha settlement was widely known as **Abakwa** (a Hausa word for 'stranger'), and attracted some other foreign settlers such as the Bamilékés, the Bamouns, the Bansos, etc, and most recently, the Ibos (from Nigeria) who settled in Mankon. These migrant settlers had their leaders and each of them represented the interest of the group in the *Fondom*. These people mostly engaged in trade, e.g. the Hausas were famous for Kola nut trade and cattle. As aforementioned, these strangers were given land as long as they recognised the authority of the Mankon *Fo* as the custodian of the land.

Nevertheless, due to the influx of settlers, “a commercial-oriented land tenancy system developed in Mankon” (Achu, 1990:63), which later gave way to outright selling (though illegally) by clan members who claimed authority over the piece of land in question.

In this chapter, we situated Mankon in time and space through the examination of her origin, migration, settlement and colonial contacts. In the next chapter, we examine her political, social, cultural and economic mainstay.

Notes

- 1 He was a prince and first son to the former *Fo* Ndefru III. He worked as a clerk in the then colonial Bamenda Province in the 1930s. As traditional historian and language connoisseur, he wrote and translated many church songs in the Mankon language.
- 2 Ntarinkon in Mankon means ‘a plaza where -**ɲkúŋə** (the people of Mankon) are entertained’.
- 3 *Mbangnizhi* [mbáŋɲí zí] in Mankon means ‘that man or that male adult’.
- 4 Some historians on Mankon believe it was *Fo* Ndemagha'a VI who founded Ala'nkyi. This cannot be so because it would be anachronistic to have seven graves of ‘lost’ *Fos* at Ala'nkyi, (no burial of a *Fo* at Fumju'u) and three graves at Fozan. If the founder of Ala'nkyi were *Fo* Ndemagha'a VI, then we must have a total of eleven dead *Fos* buried between Ala'nkyi and Fozan, whereas historical evidence proves but ten. Else, there must be a historical ‘missing link’ somewhere. (See the list of the *Fos* of Mankon at Appendix A and those ‘lost’ between Ala'nkyi and Fozan).
- 5 This can never be true as we have here only three and not four graves of the ‘lost’ *Fos* who ruled at Fozan. The present *Fo* Angwa'afo III is the 4th ruler at Fozan. *Fo* Angwa'afo 1's mortal remains must have remained at Ala'nkyi to justify the seven graves we have here. This is further justification that *Fo* Ndemagha'a

VI did not found Ala'nkyi but his successor *Fo Tsemagha*¹ did. (See footnote 23 above).

- 6 Zintgraff's life was saved "thanks to *Fo Senge* of Babungo, who gave him refuge in his palace" (Eballa and Aka 1984:41).
- 7 Some historians on Mankon believe the palace was burnt in 1891. No, the Mankon people could not have afforded their palace to be burnt in a battle they were controlling and winning from scratch. Burning their palace would have meant their defeat. This palace was burnt in the second punitive expedition when the Germans mobilised to vent their anger on Mankon after their previous crushing defeat.

Chapter Two

Mankon political, economic and social structure

2.1. Mankon traditional rule

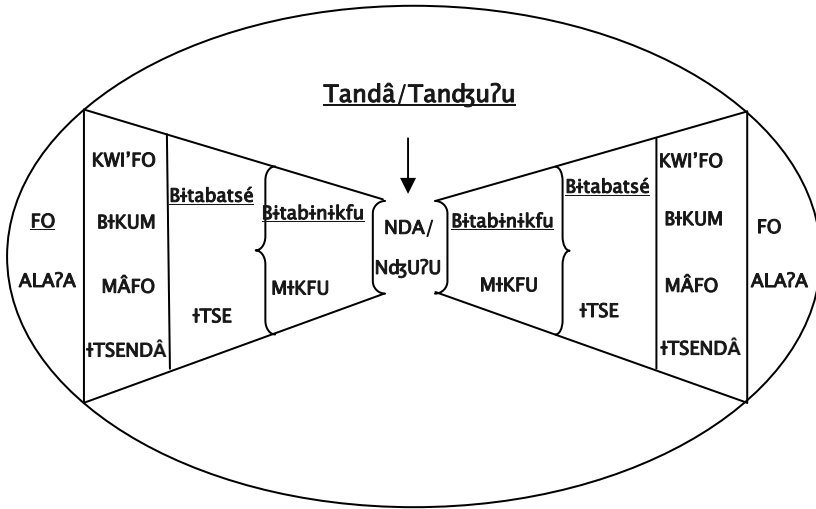
The Mankon *Fondom* – **Áláʔà** – is a solid unit at whose head is the **Fo** – king. As constituted authority of the land and paramount ruler, the king acts as an auxiliary to the country's central government within his area of jurisdiction. The **Fo** himself head of the **Nto'** clan, is ably aided in the government of the land by the nobles – **b̃ikum(ə)** (sing. **ɲkùm(ə)**), the councillors – **ĩtsénda/b̃itsenbindâ** (sing. **ntséndâ**), the secret societies/jujus of **Kwi'fo** (made up of commoners) and **Tákumbeng** (made up of the royal family), and the **Fo's** mother – **Mâfo**.

This *Fondom* is composed of nineteen (19) clans – **ĩtsé** (which are ruled by clan heads **b̃itábatse** (sing. **tátse**). These clans are further split into wards or quarters– **m̃ikfú(ə)** (sing. **ɲ̃ikfú(ə)**) with their leaders – **b̃itábiñikfu(ə)** (sing. **táñikfu(ə)**). The wards are then composed of families – **ndâ/nd̃zùʔu(–ə)** (both sing. and plur.) at whose head is the man – **tandâ/tand̃zùʔu(–ə)**.

If we looked at the Mankon political and social structure, we would notice that it is a decentralised type but each smaller unit working towards unity and harmony of the whole structure. Starting from **ALAʔA**, we get an immediate constituent (IC) **†TSE** that has its own IC as **M̃KFU** that finally gets IC **NDÂ**. Conversely, if we start from **NDÂ**, we get

intermediate Constituent (Inter. C.) M̃KFU, which in turn has Inter. C. †TSE, which finally gives ALAʔA, as the following diagram ably, demonstrates:

Fig. 2:



Apart from the *Fo*'s role in the country's central administration, he also performs the following duties:

- He presides over religious rituals, the war council, the council of **b̃kum(é)** and other important meetings.
- He awards titles to meritorious citizens for their outstanding performances (e.g. the award of the red feather insignia).
- He moderates all cultural events and activities of his *Fondom*.

- (As the highest magistrate of the land) he receives appeals on all cases except those of felony and murder.
- (As father of the land) he is at the head of all regulatory societies like the *Kwi'fo* and the *Takumbeng*.

THE *Mâfo* (*Fo's* mother)

- is in charge of the general welfare of the people,
- takes special care of the *Fo's* wives (*bànggyé-bîntɔʔ*), princes and princesses (*ɪbôntɔʔ*),
- advises the *Fo* and takes care in his absence,
- settles disputes among women in general,
- entertains guests,
- organises the *Fo's* family, and
- trains the *Fo's* new wives.

The *Kwi'fo* is the most powerful institution of Mankon, with members restricted to male commoners. It is a constituted authority of the *Fondom* which together with members of the *Takumbeng* (from the royal family), help regulate the society.

The *Bîkum* are nobles drawn from the council of the *Kwi'fo* and the *Takumbeng*, by virtue of birth and responsibilities, though some inherit.

The *Ngangfo* is a society made up of herbalists drawn from the land, which helps eradicate diseases, evil

spirits, witchcraft, and brings about fortune and good harvest on the land. Usually, its sacred juju puts some 'medicine' (herbs) at road junctions and individuals' compounds to orchestrate fortune.

It is, perhaps, because of the authority vested on the *Fo*, the Supreme Magistrate of the land and the regulatory authorities of the *Kwi'fo* and *Takumbeng*, that we have proverbs like: (i) /Àzúm a la ŋkuŋ a ntɔ́ɔ̀ bə̀ fú le / (proverb n° 58): "Can something enter the palace (ntɔ́ɔ̀) and come out again" (literal translation)? Meaning: "That which is given to the palace can never be taken back again." (ii) kwíɔ́ɔ̀ a la ŋgɛ nɪvwo ŋwo ŋkfù bá le / (proverb n° 19) meaning: "Has the *Kwi'fo* ever celebrated the same person's death twice?" The ntɔ́ɔ̀ (palace), being the capital of Mankon, any missing things, any stray animals or any food items that are taken there belong to the palace and must be consumed here by members of the palace.

2.2. Enstoolment

There are three (3) classes of succession in Mankon: that of the *Fo*, the *Bikum* and the *Ajwang* (commoners).

That of the *Fo* is the most sacred. When a *Fo* dies (*byé* – is missing), the news is usually kept secret and the palace is guarded because enemy *Fondoms* might destabilise the land; false claimants to the throne might crop up and palace property might be looted. After the deceased is

buried in a sitting position in the sacred grave – **Ndá Fô** – in the sacred shrine *Nishwim*, members of the *Takumbeng* choose a new *Fo* from his sons and hand him to the *Kwi'fo*. (It should be recalled that succession to the Mankon throne is patriarchal i.e. a son succeeds his father. First sons rarely succeed except when there is no other son. When the deceased has no son at all – a rare occurrence viewing the number of wives each *Fo* has – he is succeeded by his nephew.) When a male child is handed to the *Kwi'fo*, the latter takes him to the sacred enthronement house – *Ndaamenang* – where several rituals are performed on the appointee after which he becomes the new *Fo*. Proverb n° 12 / **Ká b̃ ndzɔʔ ɣɛ f̃ ndzéɣi mbo (a) (i)jye** / (Those that rub or enthrone the king or *Fo* do not clean their hands on the ground.) must have originated from the enthronement experience. When enthronement procedures are over, the new *Fo* is then shown to the public who pelt him with stones, signifying the last insult they would proffer on him but this insult strengthens him and immunises him. A day would then be fixed for the official mourning of the late *Fo*. On this day people are clad in banana leaves – **àdzag(ə)**– and smear wood ash – **àbvú(ə)** – on them. They (especially men with guns) take positions on nearby hills and the *Fo* gives the first gunshot after which the rest go. They then assemble at the palace plaza – **sámñ** – singing, dancing and then food and drinks are served (ACHU, 1990:51).

The *entsoolment* of nobles is done by the *Fo*. When a noble dies, the *Kwi'fo* mourns him on the first day and mourning continues until the 8th day when it ceases and a successor is chosen (from among the deceased person's sons) and taken to the *Fo* for blessing. The latter anoints him with cam wood – **bî** – and wears special herbs – **ndôrə** – round his neck. A second generation noble is enthroned in his compound and then shown to the *Fo* later.

Commoners are *enstooled* by elders of that family. A successor is anointed with cam wood (**bî**), the herbs (**ndôrə**) worn round his neck and he is offered his late father's drinking cup, cap, bag and walking stick.

Note should be taken that in case a man died without a son, his paternal nephew succeeds him. The process of succeeding one's father is **ɔdzîndâ** and the successor is **ndzîndâ**.

2.3. Economy

The economy in Mankon was mostly based at subsistence level. However, due to the advent of modernity and urbanisation, a much more scientific, extensive, organised and marketable way of carrying out economic activities was possible.

As far as food crops are concerned, the following were and are still grown in Mankon: **ntɔwî(ɛ)** (maize/corn), **màndzu(ə)** (groundnuts), **azúʔu(-ə)** (yam), **fɪkón** (beans), **ndzu(ə)** (bambara groundnuts), **ŋgvù(ə)** (local carrot),

kàsára (cassava), **àmbõ** (banana), **àkúʔu(-ə)** (colocasia) and **máfe-ŋkon** (sweet potato).

The farming methods are various, the most prominent being the bush fallow type where the men clear the grass and allow it to decay; the women then gather it and line it inside the ridges which they hoe and then plant with crops. Another method is a short-term productive, but a long-term destructive system through the practice of what is called the **àŋkára**. In this system, chamber-beds are made by covering ground on heaps of grass and allowing both ends of the beds open. Fire is then set inside and the grass burns for some days, cools and crops like cocoyam, maize, bean, vegetable, melon and pumpkin are planted. Temporarily, the yield is high but since the rich top humus soil and the bacteria responsible for it are destroyed, the whole land is unproductive later.

It should be recalled that before the advent of technical farming expertise, these farming methods were very local involving the tilling of ridges vertically down valleys and rainwater continuously swept them away.

To enhance their diet, the Mankon people rear animals for local consumption. At home, they keep fowls, various goat types and pigs. Some small amount of cattle is reared. Fishing is done through the digging of fishponds or hooking in the River Mezam and its tributaries during the dry season. Most important is the fishing in the River Mezam ox-bow lakes and other depressions. One of such great fishing spots in the pre-colonial and post-colonial eras was at the Mezam

River Confluence at a place called *Mìghong*. Women using traditional fishing nets – *m̃yón*, mainly did this. The catch was shared between the women and the clan head who owned the fishing grounds. The fish was prepared and consumed wet or smoked.

Furthermore, hunting of various wild animals in the past like the antelope, deer, monkey, fox, cutting grass, etc was done in the forest. Two of such great hunting grounds were owned by the *Fo* at *Nkfura* and *Aturafo*. Men organised themselves in hunting groups with a pack of dogs, spears, clubs, nets and (recently) Dane-guns; set fire on one end of the forest and drive the animals to the other end where they (men) waited with these instruments. The most effective weapon was the net that was set. The person waiting by the side of the net never made any noise to scare the prey away, hence the source of the proverb: **Awóm a ɣamnè ntsu ŋkʰá/** (proverb n° 25).

If it were simply a publicly owned forest, the catch was shared among the hunters. However, if it belonged to some clan head or the *Fo*, they had a greater share of the meat (as owners of the hunting ground). Nevertheless, in all cases, certain totemic animals like the leopard, wolf, tiger, etc were taken to the palace and he who killed the said animal was decorated with a red feather for bravery and/or rewarded with spears and more hunting tools. With the coming of so many people to Mankon and the expansion of the *Fondom*, most, if not all of these forests

have been cleared for settlement or farming and thereby causing the animals extinct.

The men also engage in wine tapping for drink locally and the excess is sold in the local markets like Samnimandza'a, Ntsualam, Mile 8, Mbango, etc. This wine is tapped from trees like the raffia palm and the date palm. The method of tapping needs special expertise, because the secret of a successful tapping lies in being able to "... recognise and predict the readiness of the plant with regard to tapping" (Che Chi, Henry, 1990: 13). After identification, a mature stem is prepared and a hole is bored through, which allows the wine sap to flow. A funnel is used to connect the liquid into special calabashes which the tapper collects each time he comes for tapping which is done at least twice (sometimes thrice) a day.

However, with the help of *Fo Angwa'fo* III, a trained Agronomist, farming methods have been improved in the *Fondom*. He taught through examples: he opened up farms in Befang, Asongka'a, Nta'ngub and Bagmandey where he planted and reared variously, coffee, mangoes, guavas, maize, plantain suckers, palm trees, etc and cattle, goats, fowls and others. The farm methods used now are modern and extensive. Added to the above are agencies like the National Fund for Rural Development (FONADER), North West Development Authority (MIDENO), Heifer Project International (HPI) and various field extension workers who help vulgarise farming methods and give aid through nursery plants, fertilisers, etc such

that the Mankon people have improved upon their farming methods. Some of their produce is now marketed and the money is used to solve their other pressing needs.

In both pre-and post-colonial Mankon, industries abound. One of such industries and the most important is the iron and steel industry which in the pre-colonial period did smelting and *smithing*. Iron ore was got along the riverbanks and valleys of the Bamenda Plateaux especially in Akum and Mendankwe (ACHU, 1990: 15). Burning charcoal was used to heat this ore to melting point. The molten ore was then formed into various shapes at the smelting centres at Ntsualam, Alamatu and Nta'titon. Products like spears, knives, saws, gunpowder and bullets were bartered in the local markets or used at home. It should be remembered that it is from the *smithing* experience and its scorching heat that the proverb: /**Ká ntwe-àlam a mbóḡə yi muḡə**/ (proverb n° 71) which literally means "the blacksmith is never afraid of hearth fire" is got. Of course, the smith who spends most of his time near the scorching heat of a fire cannot go elsewhere and pretend to be scared by hearth fire. (Also, compare this proverb with proverb n° 60).

The weaving of baskets and bags using raw materials from various palm fronds was and is still practised in many parts of Mankon. Added to this artisan is carving. Usually, a tree is felled and cut into bits and

local chairs, doorframes, traditional whistles, statues, etc are carved out of them.

Because the pre-colonial Mankon needed pots to cook food, clay was collected, moulded into various shapes and burnt solid in local kilns. Other pots were smelted and *smithed*.

Local oil mills were constructed all over Mankon and especially famous were those at Ala'amandum. These were constructed when pits were dug and lined with stones. The palm nuts were then harvested, boiled and crushed with long pestles in these pits after which the pulp was extracted from the chaffs; boiled again, and oil was got. This practice now is obsolete with the advent of mechanisation. *Fo* Angwa'fo III (for example) produces oil from his farm at Bagmandey using modern machines.

Perhaps the most interesting industry is the quarry industry. Before the advent of this industry, building of houses was done by pinning sticks in the ground, tying others on them and plastering with mud. The roof was made of thatch. Later, mud bricks were used and the roof was still thatched. Urbanisation brought about the quarry industry in Mankon. Those who promoted this industry in Mankon included: Pa Paulo Ator-bizhwe'e, Pa Asa'miwaa, Pa Tuma-bidzong, Pa Lucas Forbiwey, Pa Samuel Nche alias 'Sam Bamenda', Pa China Augustine Fonteh and the Atso'a family for stones; Pa Sombong, Pa Aaron Tabufor, Pa Tumasang Anonimbo'o, for sand quarrying. The two types of stone that are quarried are **ḡḡḡḡ tsù-tsu(ə)**

(granite/sandstone) and the **kḏḏ ḡḡḡḡ** (basalt). This industry has attracted so many employees who dig out the stones, split them into various sizes using hammers. These stones are used in building houses, bridges, roads, etc. The sand dug from the rivers is used in cementing the above. Landowners in the urban centre use these materials in building houses that they lease for money.



*Housing in the past was made of sticks and thatch. To the left we have the Palace Temple **àtsum** at Fozan believed to be three centuries old (You can see this structure in the background of the photo of Angwa'fo II above taken by the Germans. In the past, this was the official residence of the Fo). This structure was built when Fo Fomukong (1799–1866) led his people to Fozan. Part of it was destroyed by the German–Bali raid on the palace in 1895. What we see now is the renovated building (courtesy Palace archives). To the right we have **BANIN ARTS CENTRE** – Mankon.*

With the advent of modernity, most if not all of the above practices have been discarded. Quite often, we find the Mankon youth or adult rushing to the Bamenda cosmopolitan area to do carpentry, brick-laying, night watching, etc. The women are involved in prostitution. A greater population now is literate through the many schools that abound the vicinities; they now work in government offices for big pay packages. Others are self-employed in business and the New Information Technology.



It is with stones from these quarries that the modern town of Mankon was and is still being built. From top left to right, we have Pa Atanga Mandzu's quarry (far left) and Mr. Ndi'ikasara's quarry (middle, far right and bottom). Sometimes it is risky business with Frederick Anye in action in the quarry cave.

Bottom, schoolchildren split stones (during the holidays) for money to prepare for the next academic year (amateur pictures).



2.4. Social aspect

The Mankon community is replete with so many socialising activities. When in joy, sadness or pain the people communally express their joy or sorrow in recitations and songs. Marriage and birth ceremonies are times when they are most happy; ritualistic performances are times when they are most solemn; and death ceremonies are times when they are sad and in pain, but consoling, for: /**Ntsú-nda mu-mbaŋɲɪ tɛ azɔb ká (i) be yi wə**/ (proverb n° 29). Yes, “There is no household void of misfortunes”.

As far as marriage is concerned, we have to look at the royal marriage and that of the rest of the people. The

former is that of the *Fo* and his sons. Normally, certain families are marked out to give a daughter to the palace for marriage and others are “caught” when the *Fo* or his councillors see a beautiful girl that is fit for the palace and invite her to it. When she comes, cam wood is rubbed on her forehead, showing that she belongs to the palace. She may then be given to the *Fo* or to any of his mature sons. The cam wood once rubbed, the girl cannot escape from the palace or refuse marriage again. After all, /**Azúm la ŋkuŋ a ntɔʔɔ̀ bə́ fú le**/ (proverb n° 58).

For the rest of the people marriage takes place among clans. The parents of the “two-to-be” usually meet; while drinking palm-wine brought by the suitor, they discuss without the consent of the boy or the girl. When agreement is reached at, the two families arrange for a day when the first (of the four) instalment of the bride wealth has to be given. When all of the above is completed, a day is fixed for members of the girl’s family to escort her to her husband’s house.

Childbirth is one of the moments when these people are most happy. When a child is born to a house, family members and friends bring food everyday to feed the mother and child. They spend days here before returning home. During this time, birth songs are sung. Twins {**mǐfág(ə)**}, their mother (**māngyé**) and their father (**tǎngyé**), are shown particular reverence. This is because the twins are believed to have connections with the gods.

Death ceremonies are one of the instances when communality and sociability are expressed. Relatives of the deceased stay in the latter's compound for a week, the first three days of which are those of mourning and the rest, for eating, drinking and dancing. The latter activities are to escort the deceased in life after death. (Because of economic hardship and the changing time, mourning days have been reduced from eight to three.)

Added to the above are various juju and dancing groups, like the **Mbáglum**, **Asámba**, **Mákɔnge**, **Ntɔ́ib-ndzɔŋ(ə)**, **ɪtsɔ́ŋ(ə)**, **Mɪnánŋ(ə)**, various women's groups and the **Abɪŋə-ntsəŋ** (Bottle Dance) which keep the people alive on rest days.

2.5. Religion

Before the advent of Christianity, the only worship was animism. Various clans had their gods and shrines. There were tree-gods, stone-gods, stream gods, etc, at whose shrines natives went and prayed to their ancestors. The *Fo* himself had to and still has to go to Ala'nkyi (a city of water) every year to pray to his forefathers to enable him to rule well, and to rid the land of any misfortunes. After each ritual at Ala'nkyi, more rituals continue with singing and dancing at Samnɪ (the palace piazza). Christianity has greatly reduced ancestral worship at clan level, with the only exception of that of the *Fo*.

2.5.1. A ritual: from Ala'nkyi to Samnɪ

In Mankon, almost every year, is celebrated what is termed "The *Fo's* Dance". Very few people (natives and non-natives alike) know that this three-day ceremony at Samnɪ is a culmination of a series of activities and rituals that start all the way from Ala'nkyi – the sacred shrine and the soul of the Mankon *Fondom*. Still few are the people who know that it is the paramount role of the reigning *Fo* to visit Ala'nkyi every year to offer sacrifices and to pray to his forefathers (the late *Fos*) to enable him to rule well, and shower blessings on his land and people. Yet few are those who are aware of the fact that the staging or non-staging of the *Fo's* Dance depends on the acceptance or refusal of the sacrifice offered. A refusal of such a sacrifice may be because the ancestors are angry with the *Fo*, the natives and/or the land has been desecrated.

The following write-up, therefore, is to enlighten whosoever is interested in the pre-Dance rituals. The writer has painstakingly, through oral interviewing of cultural virtuosos, and personal experience, paid an egret eye on the activities that take place from Ala'nkyi to Samnɪ – the palace plaza.

2.5.2. A brief history of Ala'nkyi

Ala'nkyi (a land of water) is the sacred place where the Mankon people settled after the migrations of Widikum. On the hill at Ala'nkyi are found seven ɪtúniɪfwim(ə) (graves of the seven *Fos* who were 'lost' here. Here again, are found the nɪɪfwéri nɪ kwiʔfɔ (the *kwi'fo's* sacred stone)

just like the one found at *tsangdaamukong*, and the **mbǝ**, (the *Fo*'s resting place which is tantamount to a palace at Ala'nkyi. This area is a tourist attraction. In the valley below, is found the sacred water – **ŋkyímalíʔə**.

The Ala'nkyi delegation is usually made up of the *Fo*, the *Kwi'fo* (sacred juju), *Takumbeng* (royal family), and some *bikum* (king-makers). The chief performer is usually the *kwi'fo*.

Once the performers from the palace at Fozan arrive Ala'nkyi, they first of all **zém(ə)** (wake up the *Fos* in) the seven **ĩtúniɸwim(ə)** before going to the **ŋkyímalíʔə**.

At **ŋkyímalíʔə** before entry, the **ntsù-abuʔu(ə)** (entrance) is cleansed with a young cock or hen that is killed and put at the gate. Some libation is also poured here. The sacred waters of **ŋkyímalíʔə** are treaded exclusively by the *Fo* and the *Kwi'fo*. Immediately after entry, is the **àkóʔəsəfɔ** when exclusively a white cock is used to perform a ritual on the *Fo* after which **bî** (cam wood) is rubbed. The **àkóʔəsəfɔ** is done in this sacred pool from where water is collected in the **bĩkáʔa** (sacred gourds) and given the *Fo* to drink.

After the libation, the white cock is released and watched. If the ancestors accept the libation, the cock excretes on the spot, or moves a few metres to do so or sheds a feather. A contrary action to the entire above means refusal.

2.5.3. The Nkyímalí?ə

It is a sacred dark and mysterious pool believed to be inhabited by spirits of all the ‘missing’ *Fos* of Mankon. From the inner depth of this holy water, the spirits reward virtue or unleash powerful and often dreadful and dreary retribution upon any native who goes amiss. The spirits’ wrath can only be soothed and cushioned with supplicating sacrifices, and their blessings can only be graced by more offerings.

In the sacred raffia-palm bush surrounding this water and upstream no ordinary man can tread. Only kingmakers can dare set foot here. A story goes that a boy fished in this water one time and had to be wrenched from the chilly claws of death by intensive cleansing by the *kwi’fo*. This boy’s life was only saved because he was ignorant and innocent. Boastful adventurism would have brought the iconoclastic debunker instant death.

2.5.4. Back on the hill

From *ŋkyímalí?ə* to the hill where we have the graves of the seven late *Fos*, four rams are killed and each body placed on the graves of elders (in the land of the ‘living dead’). To the juniors, that is the recently ‘lost’ three *Fos*, are placed three chickens. After this, a *ŋgəb(ə)* (gourd) is filled with wine and water respectively and spilled on each of the graves. This performance is called *ntúmŋye*.

It should be recalled that the chief performer up to this point is still the *kwi’fo*, and that his gift is a cock.

Afterwards the cock is killed by the side of the **nĩtʃwéri nĩ kwiʔifo** and eaten by members of the *kwi'fo* known as **bĩkum bĩ kwiʔifo**.

The rams that are killed are chopped up into pieces, placed atop each four graves representing various **ndâ** (clans) and members of each clan pick them up. The same thing is done for the other three graves using the chickens that were also killed. In turn, each of the various clans gives a calabash of palm-wine to the *kwi'fo*. At the end of the performances, the palm-wine brought in the **bĩkáʔa**, is shared to everyone and trumpets are sounded home while performing at other minor holy places on the way.

When in the palace at Fozan, another ram and two chickens are also killed in the **nĩʃwim(ə)** (another shrine here). All the **bĩkum(ə)** and **ĩbôntʔʔ** (*Fo's* children) are assembled. Wine is brought and first **tsám(ə)** (tasted) by the *Fo* and shared to all alongside some meat. The libation of **ntári alaʔa(-ə)** (feeding of the people) is done with two cocks that are roasted and prepared with other food items.

2.5.5. After Ala'nkyi

The period and time of the Dance are then planned following the vicissitudes of the weather at the time. A very important rite – The Musongong ritual – precedes the three-day Dance period. Just before this rite is the washing of the **àtséʔε-àbĩŋ(ə)** (Dance Flag) that has to be hoisted all through the period of the Dance.

2.5.6. The Musongong rite

This is a ritual performed in a stream – Nkyi Asa’a – close to **Sámnĩ**, the palace piazza, on a **Sàmne** (market and traditional) day. It is an exclusive male privilege: kingmakers and *Fo’s* sons (**ĩbôntĩ**) as participants, though it can be watched by the rest of the male population.

Bare up-skin, **ntùm(ə)** (loin-cloth) fastened round the waist, **mĩndrə** (ceremonial grass) wound on their necks, the party moves downstream to the tune of some music played by other men using the gong and the long drum. The chief performer who holds a cock and the shoot of a raffia-palm leads them.

While in the stream, the leader of the group immerses the cock and a rifle in water while chanting sacred words. The participants then wash their faces in water and have their rifles and musical instruments blessed by the chief performer who immerses the cock and raffia-shoot in the water and uses these to rub them. It should be noted that propitiating words are mentioned during this ritual: those of peace and tranquillity in all of Mankon and especially in the time of the Dance.



*Bare up skin, the **ntùm** tied round their waists and **m̃ndbr̃** wound on their necks, the Musongong train (far left) move downstream; (middle and far right) the Musongong team return from stream to ceremonial ground at **Sám̃ñ** (courtesy Palace archives).*

After the ceremony, two gunshots are fired and all the guns are raised high. A song is then started and the train moves in Indian file up to the palace plaza. The rhythm of the song is *antiphonal*, that is, a soloist gives the lead and the rest answer:

Soloist: **Hó hó hó àsòṅdòṅ**

Chorus: **Hó hó hó ásòṅdòṅ hó†**,

and at times there is variation like:

Soloist: **Hé hé àsòṅdòṅ**

Chorus: **Hé hé ásòṅdòṅ hét.**

At **Sám̃ñ**, a new song is started:

Soloist: **Hó yá hò yà hó yá hó† Músóngóng ákwé.**

Chorus: **Hó yá hò yà hó yá hó† Músóngóng ákwé.**

(**Hó yá hò yà hó yá hó†** Músóngóng has come home).

Soloist: **Hó yá hò yà hó yá hó†** Músóngóng ngwár†-mbyé

Chorus: **Hó yá hò yà hó yá hó†** Músóngóng ngwár†-mbyé
(**Hó yá** Músóngóng, the goat-killer.)

Soloist: **Hó yá hò yà hó yá hó†** Musóngóng amá?ántsô.

Chorus: **Hó yá hò yà hó yá hó†** Musóngóng amá?ántsô.
(**Hó yá** Músóngóng, the warrior).

Soloist: **Hó yá hò yà hó yá hó†** Músóngóng áléb álébə.

Chorus: **Hó yá hò yà hó yá hó†** Músóngóng áléb álébə.

Hó yá Músóngóng, gently, gently), and the performers dance in a circle brandishing their rifles in the air. The *Fo* joins them. As the onomatopoeic sound of **áléb álébə** (gently, gently), dies down, the music also gradually stops and the men put down their guns and musical instruments in succession. The *Fo* **ṇáṇə(-i)** (sits down) amidst praises of: “**hú-ú-lí-í, hú-ú-lí-í, hú lí-í-í-í-í...** from his numerous **bàngyé b̃nt̃ʔ** (wives). There is dead silence after which the head performer consults with the *Fo* on his **àbəri(-ə)** (throne), and goes back to the guns.

That done, the performer places the cock on the rifles, chants a few words and tears open the neck of the cock with his bare hands! He spills the blood from the cock on the guns, breaks its legs and wings while reciting some words of curse: **if an enemy wants to step foot on Mankon land, let them die like this cock.** Next, cam wood is brought and rubbed on the guns followed by water from a calabash that is spilled round the guns. The water from the calabash is lastly poured near the *Fo* and the rest is run with, at top speed to the palace.



The Musongong lead performer (far left) consults with the Fo at his throne, goes back to the guns, (middle) tears open the neck of the fowl with his bare hands and spills the blood on the guns while murmuring propitiating words. (Far right) we have Musongong members in a 'war dance' (courtesy Palace archives).

At the end of this ritual, participants go to the palace for feasting and prepare for the dance proper.

2.5.7. The Dance proper

The first day of the Dance – **Mbĩ?inə** – is for a war dance. Mostly men (except for a few daring women) dress in war manner and fire guns; some brandish their machetes and others raise spears and clubs. The *Fo* introduces the gun-firing.

The second day – **Zĩnká?anə** – is consecrated for a colourful dance. Women and men groups gallantly dressed in traditional wears *eurhythmically* twirl to the tune of good

music. The famous **àsɔŋ-ɪfyé** (a man dressed in a colourful traditional gown with strands flowing behind, and his numerous wives picking up the strands from time to time and shaking off the dust from them). The much-dreaded **lâlê** (the Dance orderly men and clowns) parade the dancing arena. The *Fo* dances round the piazza once, and after, calls for the close of the Dance for the day. The *Fo* addresses the population and wining and dining come after.



(Far left) a lâlê member poses for a picture. (Middle and far right) a cross-section of dancers at the Fo's Annual Dance clad in their colourful b̃tɔɣɪ (sing. = t̃ɔɣɪ) – highly priced regalia made in Mankon. The magnificent àsɔŋ-ɪfyé displays on the far right (amateur photos).

The third and last day continues with dancing. The important event on this day is the removal of the Dance Cloth, an event known as **ɲè-ayán(ə)**. Immediately after

removal, the cloth is run with to the palace. (The legendary performer here in the 20th century had been one Pa Zama Nyen-ahang noted for his spectacular and athletic runs.) This marks the official end of the Dance and the beginning of feasting.

2.6. The Mankon language

The Mankon language belongs to the “Ngemba” group of languages that LEROY (1977:14f.) says comprises: Pinyin (bapinyin); Mankon (bande, bandoe, bandeng); Awing (bambuluwe); Bafut (befe, afughe); Nkwen (bafreng); Mendankwe (munda, bamenda); Bambili (mbili, mbele); Bambui (mbui); Bamumkumbit (bamukum); Kpati and Shomba (chomba, bamechom, alamatsom); Mbatu ; (bambatu, matu, alamatu); Njong (banjong); Akum (bagangu); Mundum I (mberewi, bamundum I); Mundum II (anyang, bamundum II); Ala'tening; Babaji (beba, mubadji).

Due to her migratory history, her formation of a confederacy, the maintenance of marital, trade, friendly and interactional ties with her neighbours, the Mankon community is multilingual. The main language, however, is still Mankon. LEROY again has this to say:

Le multilinguisme était courant à Mankon parce que 20% des femmes mariées à des hommes de Mankon venaient d'une chefferie étrangère et parlaient leur langue à leurs enfants. De plus, elles étaient assistées dans leur travail,

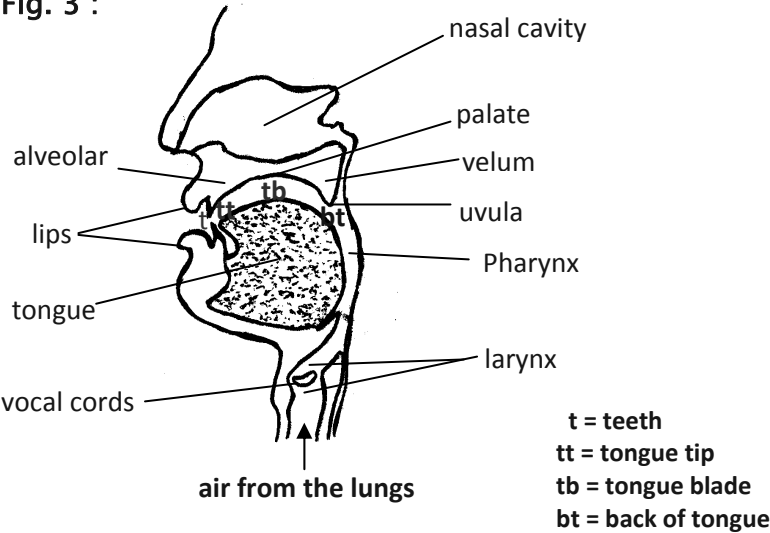
comme tout autre femme à Mankon, par un enfant de leur chefferie qui, lui aussi, utilisait sa langue maternelle. Enfin, les commerçants de Mankon, pour resserrer les liens avec leurs partenaires étrangers, faisaient des échanges de personnel. Si bien qu'il était courant qu'à l'intérieur d'une même maisonnée on parlât plusieurs langues, et que beaucoup de locuteurs Mankon fussent capables de parler, à côté de leur langue maternelle, plusieurs autres langues. Ce multilinguisme était considéré comme un atout et était, par conséquent, favorisé.

(LEROY, 1977:14f)

3.1. Phonetics

Speech sounds constitute the basis of all human languages. Human anatomical parts (See Fig.3) are central in phonetics. In the production of speech sounds, air is emitted from the lungs when they contract. The emitted air is modified at different points in different ways (as it passes through the mouth and/or the nose) to produce different sounds. Where the air is modified along the speech tract is known in linguistics as **place of articulation**; how it is modified is known as **manner of articulation**.

Fig. 3 :



The mechanism of speech production starts when **air from the lungs** passes through the windpipe or trachea. If the vocal cords are spread out, the air from the lungs passes unperturbed. The sound produced in this case is **voiceless**. Conversely, if the vocal cords come together to block the air passage, this air struggles to push them apart, and the sound produced is **voiced**. (We must note that all vowels are voiced.) Sounds are produced either as consonants or as vowels. Below is an inventory of the sounds of Mankon [màŋkon].

3.1.1. Identification and classification of sounds

Consonants

A. Place of articulation

- a) **Bilabials** are consonant sounds produced using both lips. Examples are [b, m]. It is strange and surprising that Mankon in the Lower Ngemba language area does not have the [p]. It will be extremely onerous if not impossible to induce a typical native of this area to articulate English words like Peter, Paul, pear, wrapper, pencil, Pope, etc correctly. They will almost invariably realise the above words as [bíta, bɔl, bya, laba, bensərə, bobə, etc]¹.

- b) **Labio-dentals** are sounds produced by placing the lower lip against the upper teeth. Examples are i) monographs: [f, v] and ii) diagraphs: [pf, bv].
- c) **Dentals / Inter-dentals / Apico-dentals** are consonant sounds produced with the tip of the tongue coming against the upper teeth or between the upper and lower teeth. Examples are diagraphs [tf, dv].
- d) **Dental alveo-palatals / Alveolars** are produced by placing the tip or blade of the tongue against or near the alveolar ridge (i.e. the cavity immediately behind the upper teeth). Examples are i) monographs: [t, d, s, z, n, l, and r] and ii) diagraphs: [ts, dz].
- e) **Pre-palatals / Palato-aveolars / Aveo-palatals** are sounds produced by moving the tongue near or in the area just before the hard palate. Examples are monographs [tʃ, dʒ, ʃ, and ʒ].
- f) **Palatals** are formed by placing the blade of the tongue on or near the middle of the hard palate. Examples are monographs [y and ɲ].
- g) **Velars** are produced by placing the back of the tongue near or at the soft palate or velum at the back of the roof of the mouth. Examples are monographs [k, g, ŋ and ɣ].
- h) **A glottal** sound is articulated when air from the lungs is briefly and completely held in the 'glottis' (between the vocal cords) and then suddenly

released. The resulting sound is known as the 'glottal stop'. This phenomenon is common in languages in the *Grassfields* area of Cameroon, but does not appear in the Roman alphabet. Nevertheless, the linguistic convention to represent this occurrence is [ʔ].

- i) **Labio-velars** are consonant sounds produced when the lips come together and the back of the tongue is placed on the soft palate (velum). Examples are 1) monograph [w] and ii) digraphs [kf, gv].

B. Manner of articulation

- a) **Plosives** or **Stops** are sounds produced by briefly, completely blocking the air stream, and then releasing it abruptly causing an explosion. Examples are [b, t, d, k, g, ʔ]
- b) **Fricatives** are articulated by narrowing the air passage such that the air fizzles through without friction. Examples are: [f, v, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, ɣ].
- c) **Affricates** are formed when the air passage is completely blocked but released gradually without an explosion, though friction is heard. Examples are [tʃ, dʒ, bv, tf, dv, ts, dz, kf, gv].
- d) **Nasals** are produced by lowering the velum and allowing air to pass through the nose. Examples are [m, n, ŋ].

- e) **Liquids / Laterals** are produced with the tongue tip raised and curled behind the alveolar ridge. The air then passes by the sides of the tongue. Examples are [l and lv].
 - f) **Vibrants/Rolls/Trills** are formed when a speech organ (e.g.) the tongue or uvula) quickly vibrates or taps against another. An example is [r].
 - g) **Glides / Semi-consonants (semi-vowels)** are produced when the tongue moves from the roof to the floor of the mouth. Examples are [y, w].
- * **Liquids, Vibrants, Nasals and Glides are all voiced.**

Table 3: First series of Mankon consonant sounds
 {Adapted from *General Alphabet of Cameroon Languages*, 1979 and International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)}

Place of Articulation Manner of Articulation	Bilabials	Labio- Dentals	Inter- Dentals	Dental Alveo- Palatals	Prepalatals	Palatals	Velars	Glottal	Labio- Velars
Stops voiceless voiced				t d			k g	ʔ	
Fricatives voiceless voiced		f v		s z	ʃ ʒ		χ		
Affricates voiceless voiced		(pʃ) ¹ bv	tʃ dv	ts dz	tʃ dʒ				kʃ gv
Nasals	m			n		ɲ	ŋ		
Liquids			lv	l					
Vibrants				r					
Glides						y			w

In addition to the co-articulated sounds that appear in the table above (**Table 3**), Mankon also has the following derived co-articulators:

Table 4: Derived co-articulators

NATURE	PROCESS OF DERIVATION	EXAMPLE(S)
Aspirated consonants	C+h	k ^h , t ^h
Palatalised consonants	C+y	by, ky, ny = ɲ
Labialised consonants	C+w	tɕw, dʒw, kw, lw, tw, vw
Apico-dentalised consonant	C+v	lv
Syllabic consonants (clusters)	N+c	mb, nd, ndʒ, nt, ɲg, ɲk, ɲw

Vowels

Table 5: Vowels in relation to the position of the tongue

Place of Articulation Manner of Articulation	Front Unrounded	Central (Unrounded)	Central Unrounded	Back Rounded
High (closed)	i	ɨ	(ʉ)	u
High (mid)	e			o
Low (mid)	ɛ		ə	ɔ
Low (opened)			a	

3.1.2. Description of the sounds

Table 6: Consonants

N°	Sound	Description	Word in Mankon	Meaning in English
1	b	voiced bilabial stop	<u>n̄</u> <u>bi</u> (ə)	Kola nut
2	m	bilabial nasal	<u>m</u> àngyé / <u>m</u> āngyé	woman / twin mother
3	f	voiceless labio-dental fricative	<u>f</u> ém(ə)	clean
4	t	voiceless alveolar stop	<u>t</u> ánikfu(ə)	quarter-head
5	d	voiced alveolar stop	<u>n̄</u> <u>d</u> órá(-i)	happiness, merrymaking
6	n	alveolar nasal	<u>à</u> nára / <u>à</u> nála(-i)	laziness, a lazy person
7	r	alveolar vibrant/trill/roll	<u>m̄</u> vúrá	oil
8	l	dental alveolar liquid	<u>à</u> láj(ə)	chair
9	s	voiceless alveolar fricative	<u>s̄</u> íj(ə)	bird
10	z	voiced alveolar fricative	<u>z</u> ó	yours
11	y	palato semi-consonant (vowel)	<u>y</u> í(é)	his/hers
12	k	voiceless velar stop	<u>n̄</u> káj(ə)	attic, sky, charms
13	g	voiced velar stop	<u>à</u> túgə / <u>nt</u> úgə	gizzard/six
14	ʔ	voiceless glottal stop	ngɔʔ	stone
15	w	bilabial	<u>w</u> éré	he/she

		glide/semi-consonant (vowel)		
16	tʃ	voiceless pre-palatal affricate	ṭíghə!	bear (it) !
17	dʒ	voiced pre-palatal affricate	ḍíbinə	to sloth, remain inactive
18	ŋ	velar nasal	ṅáṅnə	to sit on the throne
19	ɣ	voiced velar fricative	nɣam(ə)	speech, language
20	ʃ	voiceless prepalatal fricative	ʃíu(ə)	fart
21	ʒ	voiced prepalatal fricative	ʒíj(ə)	pretence, feigning
22	bv	voiced labio-dental affricate	ɓvú(ə)	sin/sinning
23	ts	voiceless alveolar affricate	àtséʔə	cloth
24	dz	voiced alveolar affricate	ɗdzúm(ə)	things, belongings; jewellery
25	kw	voiceless labio-velar stop	kʷiŋə	drum (music)
26	kf³	voiceless labio-velar affricate	nɪkfú(ə)	quarter
27	gv	voiced labio-velar affricate	ɣgvú(ə)	sin/sinning
28	lv	inter-dental liquid	nɪlvun(ə)	old age
29	ɲ	palatal nasal	ɲàm(ə)	meat, animal (prey)
30	by	voiced labio-palatal stop	byé/byâ	rotten / avocado

31	ky	voiceless palato- velar stop	àkyántɪ̃(-ə)	agreement
32	tʃw	voiceless labio- prepalatal affricate	tʃwâ !	Hold!
33	dʒw	voiced labio- prepalatal affricate	nɪ̃dʒwi(ə)	child-bearing
34	tf	voiceless-inter dental affricate	tfú(ə)	to pay
35	dv	voiced inter-dental affricate	àdvú(ə)	pus
36	lw	labio-dental alveo-palatal liquid	nɪ̃lwí(ə)	nose
37	tw	voiceless labio- dental alveo- palatal stop	àntwére	colocasia flower
38	vw	voiced labio- dental affricate	nɪ̃vwó	death
39	mb	(voiced)prenasalise d bilabial stop	mbáb(ə)	meat, rat (wild)
40	nd	(voiced) prenasalised dental alveo- palatal stop	ndáb(ə)	trap
41	ndʒ	(voiced) prenasalised prepalatal affricate	ndʒi(ə)	hunger/famine
42	nt	(voiceless) prenasalised dental alveo- palatal stop	ntón	to burn/roast
43	ŋg	(voiced) prenasalised velar stop	ngárĩ(-ə)	gun

44	ŋk	(voiceless) prenasalised velar stop	<u>ŋk</u>àʔa	light, torchlight
45	ŋw	syllabic labio-velar glide/semi consonant (vowel)	<u>ŋw</u>árɛ(-ə)	to pinch

* Clusters are formed by prenasalising the above sounds for the most part or to a lesser extent, labialising them.

N°	CLUSTER	WORD IN MANKON	MEANING IN ENGLISH
46	mbv	<u>mbv</u>ù(ə); <u>mbv</u>ùŋə	local mat ; grasshopper
47	mby	<u>mby</u>í; <u>mby</u>ɛʔɛnə	goat; shoulder(s)
48	mpf	<u>mpf</u>ú(ə)	time
49	ntfw	<u>ntf</u>wì	corn / maize.
50	ndv	<u>ndv</u>úŋ(ə); <u>ndv</u>ùŋ(ə)	to uproot; (an) elderly
51	ndz	<u>ndz</u>òm(ə); <u>ndz</u>ùm(ə)	insult; back, behind, hind
52	ndʒw	<u>ndʒw</u>í(ə); <u>ndʒw</u>éɛə	day; crush
53	ntf	<u>ntf</u>ù(ə)	(elderly) penis
54	nts	<u>nts</u>áʔa	dirt, filth, refuse (N)
55	ntw	<u>ntw</u>émtə	supporter
56	ŋgv	<u>ŋgv</u>ó	dog

57	ŋgw	<u>ŋgwà</u> rə; <u>ŋgwá</u> rə	vaccination; to fell, to sow
58	ŋgy	<u>ŋgyâ</u>	elder
59	ŋkw	<u>ŋkwé</u> ?ə	to mate/to carry a baby (e.g. on laps)
60	ŋky	<u>ŋkyém</u> (ə); <u>ŋkyá</u> ŋtə	to slaughter; to settle (dispute), arrange
61	ʃw	<u>ʃwí</u> ŋə/ <u>ʃwén</u>	lick (fingers)/suck

Table 7: Vowels

N°	SOUND	Description	Word in Mankon	Meaning in English
62	i	high unrounded front	mbyí(ɛ)	goat
63	e	mid-high unrounded front	àkwé/àkwɛn	bone
64	ɛ	mid-low unrounded front	àlém(ə)	blood; tongue
65	ɪ	high unrounded central	bɪ	cam wood
66	ə	mid-low unrounded central	ŋkáb(ə); ŋkàb(ə)	money; cap.
67	a	low unrounded central	bâ	two
68	u	high rounded back	ŋkùm(ə)	noble
69	o	mid-high rounded back	ntò	shoot (plant)

70	ɔ	mid-low rounded back	nɛbɔʔɔ	pumpkin.
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3.1.1.3. Position of sound occurrence in a word

Table 8: Consonants

N°	SOUND	Initial	Medial	Final
1	b	+	+	+
2	m	+	+	+
3	f	+	+	-
4	v	+	+	-
5	t	+	+	-
6	d	+	+	-
7	n	+	+	+
8	r	-	+	-
9	l	+	+	-
10	s	+	+	-
11	z	+	+	-
12	y	+	+	-
13	k	+	+	-
14	g	-	+	-
15	ʔ	-	+	-
16	w	+	+	-
17	tʃ	+	+	-
18	dʒ	+	+	-
19	ŋ	+	+	+
20	ɣ	+	+	-
21	ʃ	+	+	-
22	ʒ	+	+	-
23	bv	+	+	-

24	ts	+	+	-
25	dz	+	+	-
26	kw	+	-	-
27	kf	+	+	-
28	gv	-	+	-
29	lv	+	+	-
30	ɲ	+	+	-
31	by	+	+	-
32	ky	+	+	-
33	tʃw	+	+	-
34	dʒw	+	+	-
35	tf	+	+	-
36	dv	+	+	-
37	lw	+	+	-
38	tw	+	+	-
39	vw	+	+	-
40	mb	+	+	-
41	nd	+	+	-
42	ndʒ	+	+	-
43	nt	+	+	-
44	ŋg	+	+	-
45	ŋk	+	+	-
46	ŋw	+	+	-

*** Clusters**

50	mbv	+	-	-
51	mby	+	-	-
52	ntʃw	+	-	-
53	ndv	+	-	-
54	ndz	+	+	-
55	ndʒw	+	+	-
56	ntf	+	+	-
57	nts	+	-	-

58	ntw	+	+	-
59	ngv	+	-	-
60	ngw	+	-	-
61	ngy	+	+	-
62	ηkf	+	+	-
63	ηkw	+	+	-
64	ηky	+	-	-
65	fw	+	+	-

Table 9: Vowels

66	i	-	+	+
67	e	-	+	+
68	ε	-	+	+
69	ɪ	+	+	+
70	ə	-	+	+
71	a	+	+	+
72	u	-	+	+
73	o	-	+	+
74	ɔ	-	+	+

3.1.4. Comments

A linguistic analysis of the Mankon sounds above displays the following:

- i. Clusters mostly appear at word initial positions; sometimes in the medial position, but never finally.
- ii. There is a possibility of a maximum of three (3) consonants in a cluster.
- iii. The difference between [ɪ] and [ω] is not strongly attested. If any difference there is, this

can only be **allophonic**. For example, in our realisation of words like **bî** (cam wood), **bîʔi(-ə)** (termite), **bîkum(ə)** (nobles), the [ɪ] in them tends to be lip rounding (because of the [b]) than in a word like **tî-kum(ə)** (without a name) which is more dentalised (due to the [t] influence). Moreover, if one were to articulate **bîsîŋ(ə)** (birds), one will realise that the [ɪ] of both syllables undergoes (i) a sort of lip rounding and (ii) nasalization respectively, but these are not enough grounds for them to appear as two different phones. What is happening in the [ɪ] of both syllables in **bîsîŋ(ə)** is that they are **assimilated progressively** and **regressively**. [ɪ] seems labialised in the areas of [b] and velarised in the areas of [ŋ], [g], and [k].

- iv. Combinations like **civ** are not possible. The [i] is immediately palatalised to [y] after the consonant e.g. **biá** becomes **byá** (*loan* = ‘avocado’ wrongly called ‘pear’ from where the Mankon loanword comes).

3.1.5. Mankon alphabet

From the above analysis of sounds, we come out with a Mankon alphabet composed of 40 letters (9 *monophthongal* vowels, 19 consonantal monographs and 12 consonantal diagraphs):

a b bv tʃ d dv dz e ɛ ə f g ɣ
gv ʔ i ð dʒ k kf l lv m n ɲ
o ɔ r s ʃ t tf ts u v w y z ʒ

3.2. Distinctive features: phonemes

Apart from the classification we have in tables 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 above, sounds can also be classified using their distinctive features, that is following the presence (+) or absence (–) of a feature. Consequently, a sound can either be [+ consonantal] or [– consonantal], [+ nasal] or [– nasal], [+ syllabic] or [– syllabic], [+ voice] or [– voice], et cetera.

Consonants (cf Table 3)

- i. **Consonantal [cons]**: All Mankon consonants have the feature [+ cons].
- ii. **Syllabic [syl]**: If a speech sound is [+ syl], it is the nucleus of that syllable. Being the nucleus of a segment means such a segment is the bearer of *suprasegmental* features like tone. All Mankon consonants are [– syl] except prefixed homorganic nasals. All [+ syl] nasals in Mankon bear the low tone (LT) but we are not going to mark them for the tone is obvious (see Hyman, paper). Recall that all vowels in Mankon are [+ syl] because they are the nucleus tone-bearing units (TBUs) in the language.
- iii. **Continuant [con]**: These are sounds produced when air continuously flows out of the oral cavity or the nasal

cavity. [+ con] sounds are fricatives, glides, laterals and rolls. On the other hand, all stops, affricates and nasals are [– con].

- iv. **Nasals [nas]:** [m, n, ŋ, ɲ] are all [+ nasal]. All other consonants are [– nasal].
- v. **Anterior [ant]:** All sounds produced when air is obstructed at the teeth ridge or forward in the mouth are [+ ant]. Examples are dental alveo-palatals, inter-dentals, labio-dentals and bilabials.
- vi. **Coronal [cor]:** [+ cor] sounds are produced with the blade of the tongue and the tongue tip rising towards the roof of the mouth. Examples are palatals, pre-palatals and dental alveo-palatals.
- vii. **Voice:** A [+ voice] sound is produced when the vocal cords vibrate.
- viii. **Strident [strid]:** All fricative sounds are [+ strid].
- ix. **Sonorant [son]:** These are sounds produced with air vibrating and causing a resonance in the vocal cords. [+ son] sounds are glides, vibrants, liquids, nasals and all vowels.

Vowels (cf Table 5)

All vowels are [+ syl]

- i. **High:** A vowel, which is [+ high] is produced with the body of the tongue raised. Some examples are [i, ɪ, u, e, o]
- ii. **Low:** A vowel is [+ low] when it is produced with the position of the tongue lowered. Some examples are [ɛ, ə, ɔ, a].

- iii. **Back:** Any vowel produced further from the tip of the tongue is [+ back]. Consequently, all central and back vowels [ɪ, ə, a, o, ɔ, u] fall in this category. The only [- back] vowels are [e, ε, and i].
- iv. **Round:** All lip-rounding vowels are [+ round]. Examples are [o, ɔ, and u].

Table 10: Distinctive feature matrix for Mankon phonemes
(*Segments appear horizontally and the features vertically on this matrix.*) Consonants

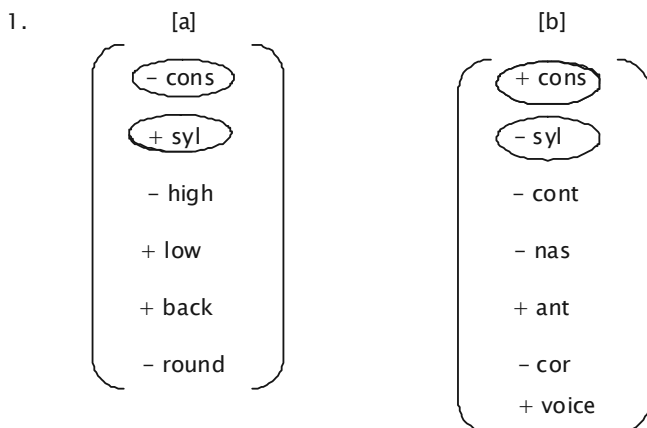
	b	bv	tʃ	d	dv	dz	f	g	ɣ	gv	ʔ	dʒ	k	kf	l	lv
Cons	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Syl	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cont	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+
Nas	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ant	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+
Cor	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
voice	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	+
Strid	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
son	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+

	m	n	ɲ	ŋ	r	s	ʃ	t	tʃ	ts	v	w	y	z	ʒ	NC ⁴
Cons	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Syl	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Cont	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-
Nas	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Ant	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	+ ⁻⁵
Cor	-	+	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+ ⁻⁶
voice	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
Strid	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	-
son	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	+

b) Vowels

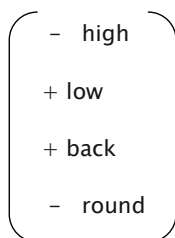
	a	e	ɛ	ə	i	ɨ	o	ɔ	u
syl	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
high	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	+
low	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	-
back	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	+
round	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+

A vowel and a consonant like [a] and [b] could be captured in the matrices in (1) below for us to better perceive their distinctive features when compared with other sounds:

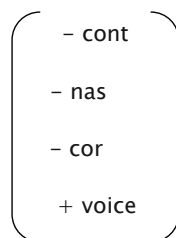


Some features are unnecessary in the identification of segments. Some examples are (i) the feature [+ syl] in the identification of vowels because we had earlier said all vowels are [+ syl]. (ii), When we identify a segment as [- high] (like above), this presupposes that it is also [+ low] and vice versa, so we need not belabour the feature [+ low] in the matrix concerned. (iii) Furthermore, because we are dealing with a vowel, the feature [- cons] is obvious, so unnecessary. In like manner, the features [+ con] and [- syl] will be unnecessary for a consonant like [b] above. While the feature [+ cons] is obvious in a consonant matrix, the [- syl] is equally unnecessary because in Mankon and other African languages, only NCs are syllabic. Features, which are unnecessary in the identification of segments, are said to be **redundant**. The circled features in the matrix above are the redundant ones. This leaves us with a clearer and more distinctive matrix in (2) below.

2. [a]



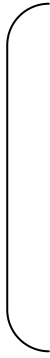
[b]



Were we to add a tone to the vowel to obtain [á] and [â], we complicate matters. Goldsmith (1976) proposes *autosegmental* representation to solve the problem. He establishes “a distinction between a segmental tier vs. a tonal tier, which are semi-autonomous in the sense that they are separate, but linked by association lines” (Hyman 2008). Because we cannot have the feature [+ high] [– high] in (3) below, both it and (4) could have a different feature *autosegmental* representation.

3. [ǎ]

- high
- + low
- + back
- round



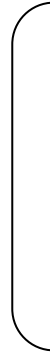
H

4. [â]

- high
- + low
- + back
- round



H L



- We note, however, that “contours seem quite secondary in African languages, where the primary opposition is between level tones..., high and low” (Ibid).

3.3. Phonemes vs. allophones

Phonemes are cardinal in any phonological analysis because they bring about meaning and pronunciation difference whereas allophones do not. Let us consider the following data in (5a) and (5b) using the words **sîŋ(ə)** (bird) and **fîŋ(ə)** (dark/black) on the one hand or **ànalî(-ə)**/**ànari(-ə)** (a lazy person) or **mbáŋni/mbáŋnə** (male/man) on the other.

5. (a) /ø-sɪŋ´a/ → [sɪŋə] **sɪŋ(ə)** vs. /fɪŋ´a/ → [fɪŋə] **fɪŋ(ə)**
 (b).i./à-nàɪ(-ə)/ or /à-nàɪ(-ə)/ → [ànàɪ(-ə)] or
 [ànàɪ(-ə)] **ànalɪ(-ə)** or **ànarɪ(-ə)**
 ii./ø-mbáŋnɪ/ or /ø-mbáŋnə/ → [mbáŋnɪ] or
 [mbáŋnə] **mbáŋnɪ** or **mbáŋnə**⁷

In (5a), the /s/ and /f/ appear in **contrastive, restrictive** or **distinctive distribution** in the minimal pairs. We say the two sounds are **phonemes** because they bring about meaning change in both words. Conversely, the [l] and [r] of (5b.i.) appear in **free variation** i.e. either sound though pronounced differently, does not bring about change in meaning of the word, so can substitute one another. Therefore, they are **variants** of the same phoneme. We call these variant sounds **allophones**. Any transcription that is broad-based and focuses only on the distinctive features of the language is called a **phonemic transcription** and it is inserted in oblique lines like /s/ and /f/ of (5a) above. On the other hand, when a transcription pays particular attention to fine narrow details, this transcription is called a **phonetic transcription** and is inserted within square brackets like in [l] and [r]. In the same vein, the [ɪ] and [ə] of **mbáŋnɪ** or **mbáŋnə** do not change the meaning of the referent 'man', but simply change the context within which each variant is used (cf footnote 5). We say they play a syntactic function at sentence or clause level.

Aspiration plays a phonetic role in Mankon. [k^h] is realised only before /ɪ/ whereas /k/ is realised elsewhere

(See also Leroy 2007). However, when /i/ appears before /k/, the *mora* /k/ is palatalised (See 9b below in 3.5.1.). /t/ is another sound that is aspirated [tʰ] in front of /i/. Consider the words:

6. (a) /n-kĩ/ → [ŋkʰĩ] **ŋkʰĩ** (rope) vs. /n-kʰĩ/ → [ŋkʰĩ] (to burn) or /n-kʰĩ/ → [ŋkʰĩ] **ŋkʰĩ** (to cut)
 (b) /n-tʰĩ/ → [ntʰĩ] **ntʰĩ** (late) vs. [ntʰĩ] /n- gién/ [ŋgyén] = **ntʰĩ** **ŋgyen** (grass stalk)

3.4. Assimilation, elision and deletion

These are common features in connected speech. Very like allophones that do not cause meaning change, segments that are assimilated, elided or deleted, do not alter meaning. They are simply features of euphony in articulation. Let us capture the phenomena in the following data:

- 7 (a) /bĩ-sĩŋ´a/ → [bĩsĩŋ] **bĩsĩŋ(ə)** (birds)
 (b) /b(ĩ)-èn b(ĩ)-á`a/ → [bèm bâ] **bèm bâ** {the people (that we are referring to)}
 (c) /tárĩ/ or /tálĩ/ + /àláʔá a/ → [tá↓láʔá] **tálaʔa** (father of the village or nation i.e. **ɸ** or President)

When we articulate (7a) carefully, we will realise that the [ĩ] of both syllables is rendered differently. In the plural marker /bĩ-/ , the [ĩ] undergoes some sort of labialisation because of the influence of the [+ voice] bilabial plosive. In the other syllable /-sĩŋ(ə)/, the [ĩ] undergoes nasalization because of the influence

of the nasal [ŋ]. The slight changes in both realisations are allophonic. We call both changes in euphony due to contact **assimilation**. Assimilation is mainly progressive or regressive. When a sound moves forward to influence another in the same environment, we call this a **progressive assimilation** like in the [b] of (7a) influencing the [ɪ]. Conversely, when the influence is backwards on the preceding sound like [ŋ] of (7a) does to [ɪ]; we call this a **regressive assimilation**.

In (7b), many phonological processes take place. /ŋw-òn/[ŋwòn] **ŋwòn** or /ŋwòn/ [ŋwòn] **ŋwòn** (person) is a class 1b noun that forms its plural in class 2. The plural nominal prefix for class 2 nouns is /bì-/ . The corresponding subject marker agreement is /bì-/ and the concord is /-á/. Both /ɪ/ in the two morphemes suffer **elision** in favour of /e/ and /a/ respectively. Equally, the /n/ of the first morpheme is assimilated regressively in the area of /b/. Lastly, the [+ high vowel] /e/ is transformed to the [+low] /ɛ/ regressively by the [+ low] /a/ of the second morpheme so that the realisation surfaces as **bèm bâ**.

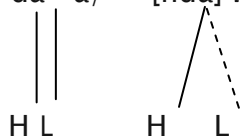
In (7c), we have the process of **deletion** when segments are deleted in rapid rendition. The normal slow and deep rendition of that construct would have been /tárř àláʔá/ or /tálř àláʔá/, but the second syllable of N₁ and the nominal prefix on N₂ are deleted giving us the construct [tá!láʔá] **tálaʔa**. As we can see, there is a *downstep* (↓) in the phonological rendition because when the segments are deleted their tones are stranded but their effects are felt in this *downstep* of the following HT following the prescriptions of *autosegmental* phonology (For more on ‘vowel deletion

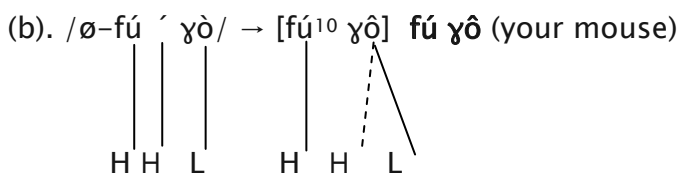
and elision', (see 3.6.) and for 'downstep', see 'autosegmental phonology' under 'tone' below at 3.12).

3.5. A review of sound distribution

Leroy (1977 and 2007) states that the basic structure of Mankon phonological analysis is CV(CV) or C₁V₁(C₂V₂). She further notes that a Mankon nominal class is characterised by the nominal prefixes: /ø-/ , /n-/ , /ɪ-/ , /ni-/ , /fi-/ , /a-/ , /bi/ and /mi/ ⁹. Contrary to some languages in the Mbam–Nkam sub-group of the East *Grassfields* Bantu languages that have dropped or are dropping their final schwa tonal segment, the dropping or retention of this final schwa tonal segment in Mankon is determined by a syntactic function (see footnote 2). However, when the schwa deletes, the tone remains floating. This floating tone (T) could be floating high (H) or floating low (L). In the event of the schwa deletion, the T cannot remain *unassociated*. It docks onto another tone bearing unit (TBU) either to the left or to the right following Clements' and Ford's (1979) stranded tone principle (STP) in *autosegmental* phonology. The data in (8a) and (8b) capture this information vividly (See tone treatment later for details).

8. (a) /n-dá` a/ → [ndâ] ndâ (house)





In (8a), we have a single lexical open nucleic morpheme with a $\bar{L}$. This $\bar{L}$ tone is because of the deletion¹¹ of the segmental or *moraic* tier (i.e. the schwa). The $\bar{L}$ cannot remain *unassociated* or stranded, so docks onto the preceding segment that created it occasioning a contour tone following Leben's (1973) and Odden's (1986, 1995) obligatory contour principle (OCP).

In (8b), the derived $\bar{H}$ spreads to the TBU on the right following Hyman's and Schuh's (1974) high tone spread principle (HTP) and Goldsmith's (1976) *autosegmental* phonology. We notice that the HTs ($\bar{H}\bar{H}$) could remain neither that way nor the $\bar{H}$ docking to the left. The latter instead spreads to the right causing a contour with the following TBU. Hyman and Schuh (1974:88) had concluded in their HTS rule:

Spreading is an assimilatory process of the progressive type, rather than of the regressive or anticipatory type. That is, the earlier tone appears to last too long, rather than the latter tone starting too early. This is the way that we should like to view this phenomenon. There is no process of tone copying or tone addition in the second syllable. Rather, the earlier tone simply enlarges its domain.

3.5.1. C₁ and C₂ consonants

C₁ consonants appear at lexical initial positions while C₂ consonants

appear at lexical final positions.

/b/ → (i) **bî** (done/ready; plant) vs. **bì** (female name)

(ii) **bâ** (two) vs. **bà** (*jocular* ‘father’)

(iii) **báné** (perch) vs. **bâné** (be crazy) vs. **bàné** (hang an object)

(iv) **àbaré/àbalé** (a mad person) vs. **àbàré** (allowance/space)

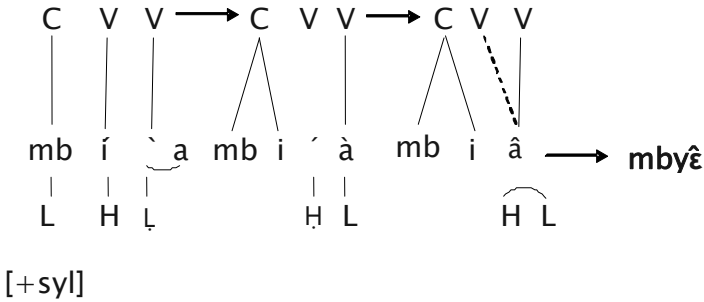
(v) **bô** (them) vs. **bó**¹² (they) vs. **bǒ** (mix)

e.g. /Bó yá á mbó bô/[bó yá á mbó bô] **Bó ya a mbo bô**

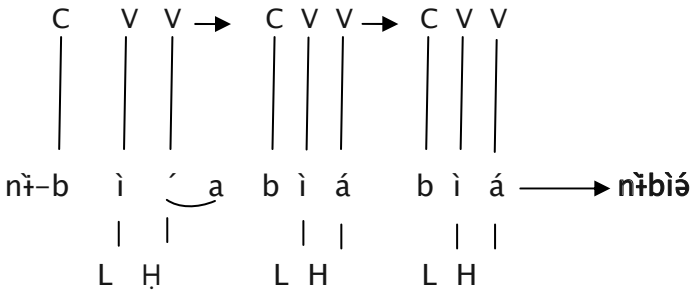
(They have given him/her/it to them.)

Mankon rarely has the sequences CiV or CuV be they at C₁ or C₂ positions (See Hyman 1985 and Clements 1986). Reporting on Lugunda, Clements (1986) says “... the high vowel *reassociates* to the preceding C slot, delinking from its V slot, which is in turn filled by spreading of the following vowel...” The Lugunda CiV or CuV “compensatory lengthening” is also true of Mankon. A few examples of C₁ and C₂ consonants below demonstrate this.

(c) /n-bí ˘ a/ → [mbyê] **mbyê** (goat)



(d) /nǎ-bì ˘ a/ → [nǎbié] **nǎbié** (kola nut)



In an open-ended position of (9a), the [i] palatalizes and links up with the C-slot. When the vowel decamps or delinks from its slot, the tone remains stranded following the STP. The tone effect then spreads to the right causing a contour of *autosegmental* phonology. Recall that there are two types of

spreading involved here: (1) the vowel [i] and [a] effects spread to the left whereas (2) the tone effect spreads to the right. In (9b) and (9c), the same process described above takes place. There is a phonological effect that transforms the [-i-a-] effect to [ɛ] when the morphemes **ŋkyɛ** and **mbyɛ** are rendered in isolation or appear at the end of a construct or before a following [a]. This is not the same case with (9a) because the word is a loan from English ‘pear’ (avocado). It is a general tendency that when a word is borrowed from one language to another, there are phonological changes. In an open position of (9d), Leroy (2007:38) reports that the [b] of **n̄bié**¹⁵ is never palatalized and so remains in that form. Furthermore, Mankon hardly allows two contiguous vowels except when a word is said in citation form or appears at the end of a construct. In both cases above, we have an obligatory high-toned final schwa added to the word. Like we mentioned earlier, words in Mankon have this floating tone in the deep structure or a final schwa when pronounced singly or at the end of an utterance. However, we do not use words as separate and distinct entities, but they appear in connected environments in a language (the only exception is when these words are used for commands). Our notions on both phonological renditions of **n̄bi** or **n̄bié** can be represented in (9e) and (9f) below:

(e) /n̄bi¹⁶ ná mé ´ / [n̄bi ná mé ´] **n̄bi ná me** (Where is the kola nut?)

(f) /kò n̄bi ´ a/ [kò n̄bié] **kò n̄bié** (take a kola nut!)

/m/, /n/, /ŋ/

10. a) **mâ** (mother) vs. **tăn** [tǎ] [father; also spelt: **tàɪ(-ə)** or **tàɪ(-ə)**]

b) **mákabè** (cocoyam)

c) **màngyɛ́** (woman) vs. **mbáŋni(-ə)** (man/male)

d) **màngyɛ́** (mother to twins) vs. **tǎŋyɛ́** (father to twins)

e) **món**¹⁷ or **múə** (child), but /**mà-n-tɔ́ɔ** / (prince or princess)

f) **máʔa** (throw) vs. **míʔi(-ə)** (dirty)

g) **mɔ́ɔ** (one) vs. **nòɔ** (a stick as peck)

h) **àléɪm(ə)** (blood)

i) **ŋkòn** (tail), **fíkón** (bean)

j) **nê** (female name), **náɪ/-náɪ(-ə)** (lazy)

k) **sɪŋ(ə)** (bird) vs. **bɪŋ(ə)** (dance)

l) **ŋáŋni(-ə)** (to sit on a throne) vs. **ŋáni(-ə)** (to be lazy)

m) **ɣáŋni(-ə)** [swallow (N)] vs. **ɣàŋni(-ə)** [crooked]

The morphemes **màngyɛ́** vs. **màngyɛ́** in (10c) and (10d) above have the same segments, but what is distinctive in both is the melody. This is one of the instances in Mankon when tone must be marked to disambiguate words, because these two words are [+ human] nouns. A breakdown of the morphology of the words shows that the prefix /**mâ-**/ is from the word ‘mother/female’ in (10a) above. We, therefore, agree that Mankon does not have only bound prefixes, but also free nominal prefixes¹⁸ (See ‘Morphology’ in Chapter Five). When /**mà-**/ or /**mâ-**/ prefixes /**n-gyɛ́**/ [**-ŋgyɛ́**], we have the utterance **màngyɛ́** (mother/female) or **màngyɛ́**

(mother to twins) respectively. [The same analysis holds for /tǎn-/ [tǎ-] (father) + /n-gyé/ [ɲgyé] = **tǎngyé** (father to twins).] What is perhaps intriguing and which no Mankon diachronic language analysis has ever proven, is whether the stem [-ɲgyé] means ‘twins’. It could have been so at some point in the history of the language, but later dropped in favour of **mǐfág(ə)** (twins), a class 6 nominal plural morpheme. Curiously enough, /món mǐfág/ [móm mǐfág] or [mú mǐfág] **mó**¹⁹ **mǐfág(ə)**/ **mú mǐfág(ə)** (twin) has no surface /-ɲgyé/ roots in its morphemic structure. This gives us the impression that Mankon must have irregular nouns.

Furthermore, one of the nouns in the compound **mó/mú-mǐfág(ə)** (twin) is **món/món/múə** (child). The word for ‘palace’ is /n-tǔʒ/ [ntǔʒ] **ntǔʒ** and the word for ‘prince/princess’ (literally, ‘a child from the palace’ is “/má-ñ-tǔʒ/” Leroy (2007:12). Following the cue in (10e) above, if **món** is ‘child’, then ‘a child from the palace’ (prince/princess) is supposed to be **móntǔʒ** and not **mántǔʒ**. Could the reason be simply phonological only in this case where /o/ and /a/ are allophones appearing here in **free variation**? Your guess is good. Could this word be a loan from Bafut, a contiguous language? (Recall the Bafut word for ‘prince/princess’ is /móntǔʒ/ **móntǔʒ**). My penchant is for the latter for two reasons: (1) when a language item (in this case lexical) is borrowed from one language to another, there is always a slight alteration (mostly phonological) for identity motives (cf 3.5.1: 9a). (2) A diachronic evolution of Mankon palace register has traces of the phrases /món nǐfón/ [mó nǐfon] **mó nǐfɔ** or **mú nǐfɔ** and **mú bǐfɔ** to refer to a ‘prince’

or ‘princess’. However, these phrases are gradually effacing in favour of /**mántɔʔ**/ (be it a loan or not).

All nasals above appear in C₁ and C₂ positions. Larry Hyman (2008:41) classifies Mankon as one of the languages having /m/, /n/, /ŋ/ codas. This could be confirmed in the morphemes in (10a)–(10m) above. However, a distinction must be made between homorganic nasals, syllabic nasals and when vowels are nasalized. A nasal is homorganic in the same place of articulation as the following consonant in areas such as mb–, nd–, ndʒ–, nt–, ŋg– and ŋk– in words like **mbàb(ə)** (rodent), **mbábə(–i)** (warm with fire), **ndâ** (house), **ndà** (a lobe), **ntáʔa** (hill), **ŋkáb(ə)** (money), **ŋkàb(ə)** (cap/hat), **ŋgári(–ə)** (gun), **ŋgàré** (*garri*), etc. It is syllabic when it assumes the same function as a tone-bearing vowel e.g. in **ŋkyì** (water). Examples of nasalized vowels appear in words like **àbə̃** (bag), **ŋkə̃** (nest), **ŋkə̃** (monkey), **lɔ̃** (seek), **ɣé̃** (go), et cetera²⁰. These words are used in statements and at the end of constructs.

/ɣ/, /K^h/, /t^h/

/ɣ/ appears before all vowels except /i/ in Mankon words like **nɪɣam** (speech/talk/language), **ɣé** (go), **nɪdɪɣi(–ə)** (eye) **ɣɔʔ** (grind), **ayɔʔ** (stew), **nɪɣúm** (ten), **nɪɣo** (illness), **nɪɣo** (chest), **À ɣén (nə)** (Has he/she gone?), etc. Conversely, [k^h] and [t^h] are the aspirated realizations of /k/ and /t/, but play phonetic roles in Mankon. As opposed to /k/ and /t/ which appear before all vowels, [k^h] and [t^h] appear exclusively before /i/ as in **ŋk^hi** (burn), **ŋk^hi** (rope/100), **àŋk^hiʔə** (cock),

màŋkʰíó (a young person/junior), **ntʰíʔi-ngyen** (grass stalk).
Compare **ntíʔi** (then) and **ntʰíʔi** (late).

11.i.

- /f/ → **fém(ə)** (clean), **fóm(ə)** (fatty), **fɪŋ(ə)** (dark/black),
fán(ə) (big), **kʰfɛrə** (wind)
- /v/ → **vùŋi(-ə)** (bat[+animate]), **vúŋi(-ə)** (short), **vùri(-ə)**
(fright), **mǐvúri(-ə)** (oil),
- /t/ → **tárə** (three), **tǐtá** (pepper), **tǐtɔʔ** (frog)
- /d/ → **dɛ̀/dàn** (gourd), **díʔə** (show), **nǐdóri(-ə)** (happiness),
dóri(-ə) (merry make)
- /s/ → **sàn(ə)** (moon/month), **sán(ə)** (to dry), **sɪŋ(ə)** (bird),
sǐŋ(ə) (smear) **sɪŋə** (today) **àtasɔŋ(ə)** (elephant stalk)
- /z/ → **zám(ə)** (spread out), **zúm(ə)** (deny) **àzúm(ə)** (thing)
- /l/ → **lám(ə)** (cook), **lùm(ə)** (female name), **nǐlan(ə)**
(pineapple), **àlən(ə)** (tie/noose)
- /r/ → **ntári(-ə)/ntáli(-ə)** (communion), **lwɛrə** (wrap up),
lwɛrə (lick one's fingers)
- /y/ → **yìŋə** (come!), **yɛrə** (carry), **mɪyà** (thanks)
- /k/ → **kíkù** (jigger), **kàba** (coin), **àku(ə)** (leg)
- /g/ → **ntúgə** (six), **ŋgári(-ə)** (gun)
- /w/ → **wéɛ** (he/she), **ɪwa** (who)
- /bv/ → **àbvú(ə)** (ash), **mbvó** (hole)
- /dv/ → **dvúŋ(ə)** (uproot)
- /dz/ → **ndzám(ə)** (axe), **ndzám(ə)** (to branch out),
ndzòm(ə) (insult),
ndzùm(ə) (back), **ndzəm(ə)** (dream/moth/drama),
ndzém(ə) (to wake up)

/c/ → **tʃí** (his/hers), **tʃwì** (antelope), **ntʃwáʔa** (to chew),
ntʃwàʔa (thrift)

/j/ → **dʒígnə** (sneeze), **dʒíbnə** (remain static/sloth), **ndʒì(ə)**
(hunger),
ndʒíbnə (to remain static/sloth), **ndʒìbni(-ə)**
(cutting grass)

/kf/ or /pf/ → **kfúrə** (eat), **nɪkfú(ə)** (quarter); **pfó** (die!),
mpfó (to die), **mpfù** (time), **mpfú** (ghost)

/lv/ → **nɪlvuŋ(ə)** (old age), /lvúŋ´ / **lvúŋ(ə)** (old)

/ɲ/ → **ɲàm(ə)** (meat/beast), **ɲám(ə)** (mix)

/ʃ/ → **ʃán(ə)** (scatter), **ɪʃí(ɛ)** (face), **ɪʃú(ə)** (fish), **ɪʃu(ə)** (fart)

/tf/ → **tfú(ə)** (pay), **ntfù(ə)** (adult penis)

/ts/ → **tsɔ́ʔ** (lift), **tsɔ́ʔ** (bush fowl), **àtsóbbə** (an
abomination)

/ʒ/ → **ʒí(ɛ)** (know/his/hers/its)

3.5.2. Vowels

Of the nine vowels in Mankon, only two can appear as grammatical morphemes (prefixes). These are class 3b (sing.) and class 8 (plur.) nominal prefix /i-/ and class seven (sing.) nominal prefix /a-/. However, all vowels appear in V₂ position.

11.ii.

/i/ → **fí** (a vegetable), **tʃwì** (antelope)

/e/ → **màŋgyé** (woman), **ɣè** (go)

/ɛ/ → **màfɛ** (sweet potato), **àléɛm(ə)** (blood). This sound
replaces an open-ended /i/ if the consonant

before it is palatalized or it is a prepalatal affricate
e.g. **mbyɛ** (goat), **ɲkyɛ** (water), **ɪfɛ** (face), **ʒɛ** (know;
his/hers) (cf 9b, 9c and footnote 42).

/ɪ/ → **ɪfú(ə)** (fish), **ɪfu(ə)** (fart), **sɪŋ(ə)** (bird), **bɪ** (cam
wood). This sound replaces /ə/ in many
environments e.g. **mbáŋɪ** or **mbáŋnə**²¹
(man/male).

/a/ → **àtsɛʔɛ**, **ndàb(ə)** (trap)

/u/ → **ɲkùm(ə)** (noble), **búʔu(-ə)** (chimpanzee)

/o/ → **àsô** (hoe), **zô** (yours)

/ɔ/ → **ntɔʔɔ** (palace), **ɲgòʔɔ** (stone), **ɲgɔʔɔ** (termite)

/ɪ/ vs. /ə/

In some environments, /ə/ takes the place of /ɪ/ but they
do not play distinctive or contrastive roles. The difference is
simply phonetic/allophonic or syntactic, for we can say
mbáŋɪ or **mbáŋnə** (man/male) without any meaning
difference. The two spellings differ only in environment as
the former (-ɪ) appears within a sentence and in interrogative
constructions whereas the latter (-ə) appears at the end of
constructs. E.g.

12.

mbáŋɪ zá (the man)

kò mbáŋnə (take a man)

/ə/ vs. /a/

These sounds are used interchangeably in some environments. This phenomenon occurs when the vowel sounds are nasalized or are followed by a homorganic nasal. Consequently, we can have the nasalized vowel sounds when the word is used in citation form or at the end of a construct and the homorganic nasal counterparts in the middle of a construct or in the interrogative form. The data below show the two spellings of the same word in the different environments:

13.

- (i) **àbɛ̃** or **àban** (bag) vs. **àbɛ̃** or **àbân** (corn *fufu*/bread)
- (ii) **ɲkɛ̃** or **ɲkàn** (nest) vs. **ɲkɛ̃** or **ɲkăn** (monkey) vs. **ɲkɛ̃** or **ɲkán** (tired)
- (iii) **mùtɛ̃** or **mùtán** (market)
- (iv) **dɛ̃** or **dàn** (gourd)

In other environments where the vowels are not nasalized, they play phonemic roles e.g. **ndáb(ə̃)** (trap) vs. **ndé̃b(ə̃)** (the handle of a gourd), **àbaré** (mad person) vs. **àbərə** (fool; *Fo's* seat)

/o/, /ɔ/, /u/

These back vowels are sometimes realized in the same words like

14.

- (i) **món, món, mú(ə)** (child)
- (ii) **ɲwòn, ɲwòn, ɲwù** (person)

The plural forms of these nouns cause a lot of phonological changes:

15.

- (a) /o/ in the singular alternates with /ɔ/ in the plural e.g.

/món wá/[mɔ́ɲgwá] ²² **món wa** (the child) → /ɪbón bá/[ɪbɔ́mbá] ²³ **ɪbón ba** (the children)

- (b) /o/ in the singular alternates with /ɛ/ in the plural
/ɲwòn wá/[ɲwòɲgwá] **ɲwò wá** (the person) → /bɛ-
èn bá/[bɛmbá] ²⁴ **bèn bá** (the people).

/ɪ/ and /a/

Apart from their roles as nominal prefixes of classes 3a, 8 and 7 respectively (see noun classes later); they also play the role of prefixed elements of concord in possessive (associative) constructions or are used in some grammatical morphemes having a V structure as locative prepositions and subject pronouns (See Leroy 2004:234 in Boyeldieu & Nougayrol and footnote 35).

16.

/à/ → class 7: **àzúʔə zo** (your yam) → **à-zó me** (Where is yours?)

- /ĩ/ {
- Class 1 (a): **ànto ɣo** (your pot) → **ĩ-ɣo mē** (Where is yours?)
 (b): **sún ɣò** (your friend) → **ĩ-ɣo mē** (Where is yours?)
 - Class 2: **bĩsɪŋ bô** (your birds) → **ĩ-bó me** (Where are yours?)
 - Class 3(a): **ĩléŋ ɣô** (your palm wine source) → **ĩ-ɣó me** (Where is...?)
 (b): **ŋgárĩ ɣô** (your gun) → **ĩ-ɣó me** (Where is...?)
 - Class 5: **nĩbóm nô** (your egg) → **ĩ-nó me** (Where is...?)
 - Class 6: **mĩkúnj mô** (your beans) → **ĩ-mó me** (Where are yours?)
 - Class 19: **fĩkúnj fô** (your bean) → **ĩ-fó me** (where is yours?)
 - Class 8: **ĩtséʔe tsô** (your clothes/dresses) → **ĩ-tsó me** (Where are...?)
 - Class 9: **mbyí zò** (your goat) → **ĩ-zo mē** (Where is yours?)
 : **ŋgvó zò** (your dog) → **ĩ-zo mē** (where is yours?)
 - Class 10: **mbyí tsô** (your goats) → **ĩ-tsó me** (Where are ...?)

: **ngvó tsô** (your dogs) → **ĩ-tsó me** (Where are yours?)

/a/ → À	kón	a	ŋkyě
He/She	drowned	in	water
(He/She has drowned.)			

(Sub. Pr.)

(Loc. Prep.)

/ĩ/ → ĩ	kón	a	ŋkyě
It	drowned	in	water
(It has drowned.)			

(Sub. Pr.)

(Loc. Prep.)

Sub. Pr. = Subject Pronoun; Loc. Prep. = Locative Preposition.

The subject pronoun /a/ above can represent **màngyě** (woman), **món** (child), **ndómè** (husband/male), etc while /ĩ/ represents **ŋkǝ** (monkey), **mbáŋnè** (man/male), **mbyě** (goat), etc.

3.6. Vowel elision and deletion

Vowel elision in Mankon is a phenomenon of a N₁ vowel eliding onto the prefixed N₂ vowel in a contiguous environment. On the other hand, vowel deletion involves the vowel (nominal prefix) of N₂ deleting in favour of the vowel in N₁. However, we must note that the elision or deletion is perceived only at the phonological level, but

when writing the word, we must do so in full. Let us consider the following examples:

3.6.1. Elision

17.

- a) /nɪŋ ´ á mú àntò/ → [nɪŋémântò] **nɪŋ a mu àntò** (put in the pot)
- b) /ntárɪ àláʔá/ → [ntárɪàláʔá] **ntárɪ alaʔa** [(i) fed the people, (ii) one whose duty is to feed the people).

3.6.2. Deletion

18.

- a) /ndá ` ɪ ʔbòŋ ` a/ → [ndâbòŋè] **ndá ʔbòŋə** (a house of goodness).
- b) /ndá ` ɪ bòn ´ a/ → [ndâbòŋê] **ndá bònə** (the house is beautiful).
- c) /ndá ´ ɪ bòn ` a/ → [ndɪá bónè] **ndá bònè** (the houses are beautiful).
- d) /kɪá bɪ n-zóʔ yí á ɪ/ [káɪbɪndzɔʔyɛɪ] **ká bɪ ndzɔʔ yɛ ɪ**.... (They do not enthrone a king; proverb n° 12).

We notice in the case of elision in (17a) above that when the vowel /ú/ is elided onto the prefix of the following morpheme (M), its high tone (HT) spreads over to the next word following

Hyman's and Schuh's (1974: 88) high tone spread (HTS) rule²⁵ and causes a contour with the low tone (LT) as stipulated by Leben's (1973) and Odden's (1986) obligatory contour principle (OCP). In (17b), the same HTS takes place as the H TBU of V₂ in M₁ is elided onto the next L TBU in a contiguous environment. When this happens, this following L TBU (i.e. the nominal prefix of M₂) is raised to high in the environment of all high tones rather than a falling contour being formed. The raised TBU is realized as *downstepped* H because of the effect of the initial low tone of the nominal prefix /à-/.

As for deletion in (18a), when the nominal prefix /ɨ/ of M₂ is deleted, its LT remains stranded and so docks following the stranded tone principle (STP) of Clements and Ford (1979) on V₂ deletion. This rule holds that a stranded derived floating tone (Ṭ) generally docks on the TBU, which caused it. Like we saw earlier in (8a), the deep structure of a morpheme in Mankon has an underlying lexical Ṭ representing a dropped schwa syllable. In speech, if the word is an open-ended (nucleic) monosyllabic morpheme, the Ṭ cannot remain unassociated, so docks onto the vowel of the preceding TBU causing a contour. Nevertheless, if this morpheme is followed by another and in the case of a Ḥ between M₁ and M₂, this Ḥ associates to the right onto the following TBU following the HTS rule (either raising a LT or creating a contour with a LT). Furthermore, in the case of vowel deletion as stated above, the stranded derived Ṭ docks following the STP. However, an underlying lexical Ḷ (1) is capable of blocking a preceding HT from spreading onto a following L TBU, (2) can move forward to cause a *downstep*

on a following HT (see Hyman paper: 15), (3) has no tonal effect on following L TBUs and (4) docks back on a preceding H TBU with an easy access (e.g. one with a CV structure) creating a contour. Tanda et al (2009: 220) had concluded that

Underlying tone association associates lexical floating tones to the tone-bearing unit to the right while derived tone association associates tones that result from vowel deletion or disyllabification/devocalization following the stranded tone principle.

Consequently, in the deep structure of (18a) above, we can have up to three $\uparrow$ s (see Hyman paper: 16): (i) the underlying lexical $\downarrow$ of the dropped schwa syllable, (ii) the $\downarrow$ of the “tonal morpheme” nominal (associative) marker / $\uparrow$ / between N_1 and N_2 (see 5.7) when deleted and (iii) the derived $\downarrow$ of the deleted N_2 nominal prefix. All three $\downarrow$ s now in a conjoint manner dock onto the left causing a contour. In the same vein, the morpheme / $\text{ndá}^`$ / in (18b) appears in front of another, so the underlying lexical $\downarrow$ between them was supposed to associate to the right (See Tanda et al above). But it associates with the $\downarrow$ of the deleted associative marker and both dock back onto the TBU of the preceding CV structure causing a contour. The subject marker for class 9 nouns is low-toned as seen in (18a) and (18b). However, class 9 nouns form their plurals at class 10 (see noun classes at table 15 in 5.3.1) and

nouns from these two classes have the same morphemic structure with the only difference being that the subject marker for class 9 is low-toned whereas that of class 10 is high-toned (see noun classes and pronouns at table 18 in 5.4). Consequently, the high-toned plural noun in (18c) surfaces with an elevated H, a H and a high associative marker. When the associative marker deletes, all HT plus two Hs spread to the right raising the following L TBU to H. The following TBU on the first syllable of M₂ does not surface with a falling tone because Mankon generally does not allow this on first syllable TBUs. (Mankon allows contours when there is a degree of vowel length especially in (mono)syllabic open-nucleic morphemes, second syllable disyllabic TBUs and after a syllabic nasal; see 3.11.4 below). In (18d), **ḡ** is a class 1(a) noun whose object marker is /á-/ , a low open vowel²⁶. When the reflexive pronoun /yí/ associates or fuses with it, the /a/ effect assimilates the /i/ regressively and transforms it to /ɛ/ which now deletes /a/. This is a very interesting phonological occurrence. With the /a/ segment deleted, its tonal tier (H) remains, and so docks back to the preceding TBU /ɛ/ which is already (H) than moving ahead to influence the following L TBU /ɔ/ (which was never involved in the deletion). This is one of the rare instances in Mankon where a H docks on the preceding TBU. (Another occurrence is with class10 nouns; cf 41d below). {Also compare /ŋkyì´ àláʔà/ [ŋkyěláʔà] **ŋkyì álaʔà**, (village water source) with /ndʒì ` àláʔà/ [ndʒěláʔà] **ndʒì aláʔà**

(stories)). More of these discussions will be seen under ‘*autosegmental* phonology’ below.

3.7. Some Mankon morphophonemic rules

3.7.1. Nouns

Like we saw earlier, some of the Mankon nominal prefixes are / $\emptyset$ -/, /n-/, /ɪ-/ or /a-/. When a nominal prefix is absent / $\emptyset$ -/, is /ɪ-/ or /a-/, it is obvious the next sound segment must be a consonant. Let us not confuse co-articulated sounds like /ts/, /dz/, etc that are considered single sound segments. We can now come up with a structure for a Mankon nominal morpheme as:

Prefix(Pr) + Consonant (C) + Vowel (V) + [CV]

Pr-C₁V₁[C₂(V₂)] (See also Leroy 1977 and 2007)

Examples

19.

/ $\emptyset$ -sɪŋ´ a/ [sɪŋ(ə)] **sɪŋ(ə)** (bird) → Pr-CVC(V)

/à-láʔá a/ [àláʔá] **àláʔà** (country/village) → Pr-CVCV

/ɪ-fú` a/ [ɪfú(ə)] **ɪfú(ə)** (fish) → Pr-CV(V)

/à-lém´ a/ [àlém(ə)] **àlém(ə)** (blood) → Pr-CVC(V)

/à-túg´ a/ [àtúg(ə)] **àtúg(ə)** (gizzard) → Pr-CVC(V)

However, in the area of a syllabic nasal (NC), when the /n-/ prefixes a noun stem or appears in an intervocalic position /-NC-/, there is a phonological effect. The NC

type must agree with the onset²⁷. We also note that all but one Mankon bi-consonantal clusters are caused by syllabic nasals (see Tables 6 & 8 above). These clusters are permissible only at word final and medial positions. The NCs could be non-modified (ø) beforehand, aspirated (Asp), palatalized (Pal), labialized (Labial) or apico-dentalized (Apico-dent). We then capture what we have discussed above in the following paradigm:

NC	{	- PrNC- e.g. ndâ , ŋká (ə), mbô , etc.
		- PrNC ^h - e.g. ntʰíʔí(-ə) , ŋkʰí(-ə)
		- PrNCy- e.g. mbyê , ŋkyê , etc. ²⁸
		- PrNCw- e.g. ntʃwá (to hold), ntʃwéʔɛ (uproot), etc.
		- PrNCv- e.g. /n-lvùŋ `a/[ndvùŋə] ndvùŋə (old), /n-lvúʔə/[ndvúʔə] ndvúʔə (to churn)

Or

-NC- e.g. /mâ-n-gyé/[mâŋgyé] **mâŋgyé**, /kĩ-n-bágnî(-ə)/[kĩmbágnî(-ə)] **kĩmbágnî(-ə)** (edible nuts), /mbó mî mbâ/ [mbómîmbâ] **mbó mî mbâ** (two hands), /àkwèn `zá`a/[àkwèndzâ] **àkwèn zá**²⁹ (the bone), /món `wá`a/[mónŋwâ] **món wa** (the child), /ʔbón bá`a/[ʔbómbâ] **ʔbón ba** (the children).

The morphophonemic rule we draw from above is that in the environment of an NC- or -NC-, the C assimilates the

N regressively through labialization or velarisation. The C to a smaller extent is in itself assimilated progressively through slight “voicing and nasalization”. We share these two views by Hyman that

Many languages require the prenasalized consonants or clusters be voiced (ND), either in their phonetic inventory or in outputs... Many show active alterations by which stops become voiced after a nasal, i.e. NT → ND (2008).

Concerning nasality, there is no reason for a L (or H) tone to nasalize a consonant. Instead, both voicing and nasalization are expected to occur after a nasal prefix... (Paper ‘African Languages and Phonological Theory’: University of California, Berkeley).

In Mankon NCs like /nt-/ , /ŋk-/ or /ntʃ-/ , the Cs do not change outright (to maybe /nd-/ , /ŋg-/) or /ndʒ-/ but there is perceptible “voicing and nasalization” of the /-t-/ , /-k-/ or /-tʃ-/ . We simply shut both our ears tight with palms and say /t/ , /k/ or /tʃ/ ; then we also say /nt-/ , /ŋk-/ or /ntʃ-/ to realize the above phenomena. (Like we saw before in the Mankon nominal prefix /n-/ , the /n/ is velarised to /ŋ/ before /k/.)

3.7.2. Verbs

Verbs in the infinitive and perfective forms also have some phonological prefixed additives agreeing with the

first sound in the root morpheme. This is also true of nouns that are derived from these verbs.

- /m/ and not /n/ has the feature (quality) [+labial], so is the likely candidate to agree with other labials like /b/ and /pf/. However, /n/ sounds [m] before them and /m/.e.g.

20. (a) **món** (child) → **ĩbón** (children) → /ĩ-bón bĩ-á a/[ĩbómbâ] **ĩbóm ba** (the children)

(b) /fĩ-kón fĩ-á a/[fĩkó fâ] → **fĩkó fa** (the bean)³⁰

(c) /mĩ-kón mĩ-á a/[mĩkó mâ] → **mĩkó ma** (the beans)³¹

(d) /bĩ-èn bĩ-á a/[bèm bâ] **bèm bá** (those people)

- /n/ shares [+anterior] features with /d/, /t/ and /l/ so, is the likely candidate to agree with them in a syllabic cluster.
- The [-anterior] velarised feature of /ŋ/ makes it agree with /k/ and /g/ that also display those features and not /n/.
- /ŋ/ refuses to palatalize, so inserts a contiguous velar that easily palatalizes between it and /y/.
- /n/ inserts an obligatory /d/ between it and /z/.
- /n/ does not agree with /l/, so transforms it to /d/.
- Sibilants /s/, /ʃ/ and fricative /f/ have /ĩ-/ and not /n/ prefixed.

The examples below demonstrate the phenomena described above.

Table 11:

sound	Imperative	Infinitive / Perfective	Derived Noun
b	bàni(-ə) (perch)	mbáni(-ə) (perch / -ed)	
by	byèʔɛ (carry)	mbyèʔɛ (carried)	mbyèʔɛ (carrier / carriage)
cw	ɬwâ (hold!)	ntɬwá (hold) ³²	
d	dĩrɪ(-ə) (be heavy)	ndĩrɪ(-ə) (was heavy)	
dv	dvún(ə) (uproot)	ndvún(ə)	
dz	dzàɣə (scatter)	ndzáɣə	
f	féɣə (blow)	ʔféɣə	ʔféɣə (cold / air)
gh	ɣâ (give)	ɣá ³³	
j	dʒògə (belch)	ndʒògə	
k	kâ (harvest)	ɣká ³⁴	
l	lám(ə) cook)	ndám(ə)	ndám mɪdzɪ(-ə) (cook)
lv	lvùn(ə) (get old)	ndvún(ə)	ndvùn ɣwo (old person)
m	míʔi(-ə) (dirty)	ʔmíʔi	
n	nùʔu(-ə)	núʔu(-ə)	

	(prepare broth)		
ny	ɲám(ə) (mix)	ɲám(ə)	
ŋ	ɲáŋnə (sit on throne)	ɲáŋnə	
pf	pfô (die)	mpfô ³⁵	
s	sùɣə (wash)	ʃsúɣə	
Sh(w)	ʃwìŋə (lick fingers)	ʃʃwíŋə	
t	təm(ə) (walk/stand/ wait)	ntəm(ə)	nɪtəm(ə) (gait)
tf	tfú(ə) (pay)	ntfú(ə)	
ts	tsóʔ (lift)	ntsóʔ	
v	vúŋə (vaccinate)	mbvúŋə	
w	wárə (fell)	ŋgwárə	ŋgwàrə (vaccination) ŋgwàrə- ɲam(ə) (butcher)
y	yìŋə (come!)	ŋgyìŋə	ŋgyìŋə (comer)
z	zəm(ə) (wake up)	ndzəm(ə)	ndzəm(ə) (moth/drama)
zh	zìtə (install)	ndzìtə	

We conclude this section by saying that a phonetic problem causes a morphophonemic change in Mankon. This is because the NC in the deep structure would have been /(-) n-/, but in the environment of other sounds, it changes to /(-) m-/ or /(-) ŋ-/. We note that hissing sounds (sibilants /s/, /ʃ/), the bilabial nasal /m/ and fricative /f/ have instead /ɨ/ prefixed. This is because of an NC restriction with these sounds in Mankon.

3.8. Reduplication

Paraphrasing Crystal (1997:325), Tanda et al (2009: 136) say reduplication involves a process of repetition in which a form of a prefix or suffix reflects certain characteristics of the root. In their study of Gunu language, they go ahead to identify two types of reduplication:

- (i) Base-generated reduplication which are reduplications derived from a base/stem/root, and
- (ii) Reduplications with no possible base as starting point. The same authors say:

“The product of reduplication expresses meaning different from the one of the base or root, or triggers a change of grammatical category” (Ibid: 136)

Mankon displays a good number of these ‘base-generated’ reduplications. Contrary to many other languages that have verbs as ‘reduplicant’ (Hyman 2008) stems, Mankon does not. Her reduplicants are chiefly in the areas of

21. Noun (N) → Noun (N)

- **ngán(ə)** (no) → **ngán-ngan(ə)** (completely 'no')
- **àdan(ə)** (nothing) → **àdan-adan(ə)** (emptiness)
- **kə** (no) → **kə-kə** (nothing)

22. Noun → Adjective

- **ŋkyì(-ɛ)** (water) → **ŋkyí-ŋkyì(-ɛ)** (watery)
- **àwanə** (sand) → **àwanə-wanə**³⁶ (sandy)
- **tsù** (landslide) → **tsù-tsu** (fragile)
- **mòʔ** (one) → **mòʔ-mòʔ** (singly)
- **bâ** (two) → **bá-bâ** (in pairs)
- **tárə** (three) → **bítarə-bítarə** (in threes)
- **kwà** (four) → **níkwa-níkwa** (in fours), etc³⁷

23. Noun → Adverb

- **àbɔ** (gentility) → **àbɔ-bɔ** (gently/gradually)
- **àlɛb(ə)** (*loan from English 'life'*) → **àlɛb-alɛb(ə)** (lively/gradually)
- **ndzùm(ə)** (back) → **ndzùm-ndzum(ə)** (secretly/stealthily/furtively)
- **lɛ** (smoothness/laziness) → **lɛ-lɛ** (smoothly/lazily)
- **dzɪŋ(ə)** (foolishness) → **dzɪŋ-dzɪŋ(ə)** (foolishly/awkwardly)
- **bâ** (two) → **bá-bâ** (collectively/in twos)

24. Adjective → Adverb

- **fùmki(-ə)** (stupid) → **fùmki-fumki(-ə)** (stupidly)

25. Object pronoun → Reflexive pronoun

- **mê** (me) → **mé-mê** (myself)
- **wô** (you) → **wó-wô** yourself
- **wére** (him/her) → **wére-wére** (himself/herself)
- **zî(ə)** (him/her/it) → **zî-zî(ə)** (himself/herself/itself)
- **bòɣə** (us=2) → **bòɣə-bɔɣə** (ourselves)
- **bîɣi/bîɣnə** (us > 2) → **bîɣi-bîɣi/bîɣnə-bîɣnə** (ourselves)
- **bîŋ(ə)** (you; plur. dative) → **bîŋ-bîŋ(ə)** (yourselves)
- **bô** (to them) → **bó-bô** (themselves)
- **bére** (they) → **bére-bére** (themselves)

26. No base stem (∅) → Adverb

- **kîri-kîri** (hurriedly)
- **gîri-gîri** (hurriedly)
- **téb-teb** (in little drops)

27. No base stem (∅) → Noun

- **ŋəŋ-ŋəŋ** (mosquito)

Reduplication contributes a lot to Mankon grammar as the productive reduplicants bring a change in grammatical category from a noun to an adjective; from a noun to an adverb; from an adjective to an adverb, etc. A few cases still maintain their class when a noun base

reduplicates to a noun. The majority of “productive” reduplicants in Mankon are from the indirect object pronoun base from which reflexive pronouns are formed. A good number of these reduplicants are “non-productive” but play a good deal of phonological and meaningful functions (as we are going to see below). The aim of this section is not to dig deep into the grammatical function of reduplicants, but to examine some phonological implications of reduplicants and how they relate to meaning and function.

To begin with, Mankon base generated or productive reduplicants replicate the base/stem/root in both segment and tone. Put differently, the morphophonological product of a reduplicant or reduplicated form is $Z = (Y \times 2)$, if Z is the reduplicant and Y is the base/stem/root. Mankon stems to be reduplicated are either monosyllabic or disyllabic and not more. This means that every reduplicant would logically have two syllables or four and nothing more. Examples are:

28.

ndzùm(ə) (back) → **ndzùm-ndzum(ə)**
(secretly/stealthily/furtively)

wére (him/her) → **wére-wére** (himself/herself)

The only tonal difference is in (22) above where **ŋkyì(-ɛ)** (‘water’ in general) reduplicates to **ŋkyí-ŋkyì(-ɛ)** (watery). This can easily be explained phonologically. In Mankon, the word /ŋkyì/ said in citation form or at the end of a construct,

bears the low tone. However, when it is said in the middle of a construct, the lexeme bears a high tone. This is why the first syllable of the reduplicant is high-toned, whereas the second syllable (that ends the construct) is low-toned.

The non-base/stem/root reduplicated forms are always disyllabic. The first syllable is simply mirrored in the second syllable in both segment and tone.

3.9. Morphological function of Mankon reduplicants

Tanda et al (2009) studying Gunu reduplicated forms, noted two grammatical functions in that language:

- i. Assigning meaning to the reduplicants or extending their meaning.
- ii. Changing the grammatical category to the base lexeme.

The two functions above are true of Mankon reduplicants as seen in the analyses in (21) to (28). However, Mankon is very rich in the morphological implications of reduplicants as far as meaning and sound are concerned.

- (a) **Onomatopoeia**: This is an instance where a sound suggests its meaning.

● **Euphony**: This is the use of soft (euphonic) melodious sounds. In a situation of euphony, it is the vowel sounds that are highlighted. Examples:

⇒ àbɔ-bɔ (gently, gradually)

⇒ **àlɛb–alɛb(ə)** (lively, gradually; **lɛb(ə)** is a loan from English *life*. Mankon has borrowed the stem and added the nominal prefix/a-/)

⇒ **tɛ́b–tɛ́b** (in little drops).

Notice how these soft euphonic sounds tally with the meaning of the reduplicants.

● **Cacophony**: This is the use of harsh consonantal sounds to express a particular meaning. (Poets exploit these when they do not like their subject). Examples are mostly the non-base/stem/root types.

⇒ **kírì–kírì** or **gírì–gírì** (hurriedly). The harsh consonantal sounds coupled with the high tone, are telling of negative meaning.

⇒ **ndzùm–ndzum(ə)** (secretly, stealthily, furtively). Apart from the consonantal cluster, the /u/ followed by the /m/ are good examples of ‘grumbling’ sounds and negative meaning.

(b) **Emphasis**: By its very nature, a reduplicant entails a repetition. Some Mankon reduplicants are for emphasis. The stem **ngán(ə)** means ‘no’. When we reduplicate by saying **ngán–ngan(ə)**, we mean we are completely negative of the proposal to the point of exasperation. Therefore, this reduplicant is meant for emphasis and intensification. In the same vein, the person pronoun **mê** (me) reduplicates to **mé–mê** (myself). The morphological structure

of this reduplicant is telling even to the eyes: “I mean myself being referred to and no one else”.

3.10. Mankon *phonotactics*

3.10.1 The concept of *phonotactics*

Like we saw earlier, **Phonetics** is the general physical study, analysis, description and classification of speech sounds in terms of production transmission and perception. **Phonology** on its part is the theoretical or abstract description of speech sounds of languages in general and how these speech sounds combine in a word. Thus, *phonotactics* which “refers to the constraints that govern phoneme sequences in a language” (Simo Bobda and Mbangwana, 1993), is directly related to phonology. *Phonotactics*, therefore, deals with syllable or word structure.

A brief examination of both the English and Mankon word morphology will display the following structures:

Table 12:

LANGUAGE	STRUCTURE	EXAMPLES
ENGLISH	V	<i>a</i> (weak form)
	VV	<i>a</i> (strong form)
	VC	<i>add</i>
	CV	<i>the</i>
	VCV	<i>ago, afar, inner</i>
	CVC	<i>cut, put, give</i>

	VCVC	<i>above, again</i>
	CVCV	<i>singer</i>
MANKON	V	<i>a/ɪ</i> (per. Pr., prep., poss. Pr., nom. Pref.)
	CV	<i>yi(-ɛ), zó, zá</i>
	VCV(V)	<i>àbô, atú(ə)</i>
	CVC(V)	<i>sɛŋ(ə)</i>
	CCVC(V)	<i>mbáb(ə)</i>
	VCVCV	<i>àkórɛ</i> (umbrella)

NB: C = consonant (monograph, diagraph, cluster).

V = vowel – (monograph, diphthong or trip thong in English).

– (monograph or diphthong in Mankon)

* This is the surface structure of the Mankon morpheme. The deep structure is $C_1V_1(C_2(V_2))$ (See morphology below).

Therefore, we can conclude from the above that the English and Mankon word morphological set-ups are virtually the same but for these differences:

- Unlike in English, the VC structure is not possible in Mankon.
- The majority of words (especially nouns) in Mankon end with a (floating) vowel. This is why we can convincingly conclude that many Mankon words have a feminine ending, and in almost all the cases the vowel is a schwa (– ə) which is compulsory in some

cases and elliptical in others. For example, in words like [ndàb(ə)] (trap), [nĩɣam(ə)] (speech/language) and [sɪŋ(ə)], the schwa can be left out in some environments without impairing meaning. Conversely, it is obligatory in a word like [àŋwáʔanə(-i)] (book/school attendance). In some cases as discussed earlier, final [- ə] and [ɪ] are in free variation and play syntactic functions i.e. they are mutually interchangeable depending on the environment³⁸. A word like [mbáŋni] (male/man) can be written [mbáŋnə], so too is nĩdíɣi/nĩdíɣə (eye).

(c) A few words in Mankon have the CVC structure, but it should be noted that the final -C can never be a diagraph or cluster unlike in English ‘simple’ /'simpl/.

(d) Although the English have clusters in all word initial, medial and final positions, it will be difficult for them to pronounce a Mankon word like [mbábə] or the names **Françoise Mbango Ntone**. They will introduce a vowel before this word and names to realise them as [embábə] and [eMbango eNtone] because such combinations like [mb-] and [nt-] are non-permissible in initial position in their language. They can only be possible in the medial position in their language as seen in “bombard(ment)”. Only combinations like [spl-], [-ŋgl], [spr-] are possible in English like in ‘splash’, single and ‘sprain’ respectively.

3.10.2. Mankon syllabic structure

A syllable structure (SS) is made up of an onset (O) and a rhyme (R). The rhyme is further split into a nucleus (N) or peak and a coda (Co). ($\emptyset$) will represent the absent element. Let us look at the syllable structure of the words: [á] = preposition (to, from, on, etc) and pronoun (he/she, his/her, etc); [mà] = I; [lón] = seek; [ntwém̩tə] = to support; [màŋkún̩ə] = the people of Mankon; and [ɪbôn̩tɔ] = princes/ princesses.

Fig. 4: [á]

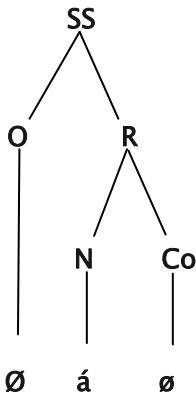


Fig. 5: [mà]

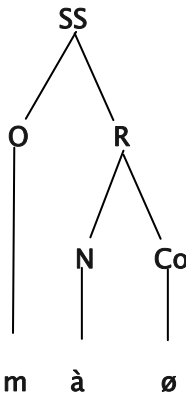


Fig. 6: [lón]

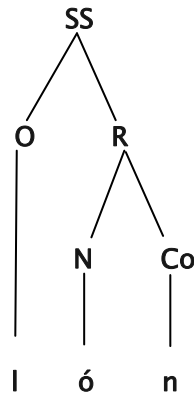


Fig. 7: [ntwém̩tə]

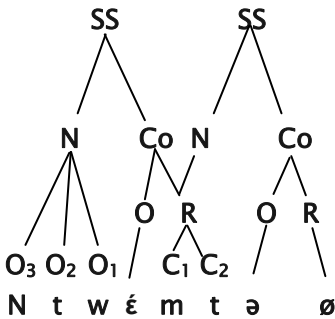


Fig. 8: [màŋkún̩ə]

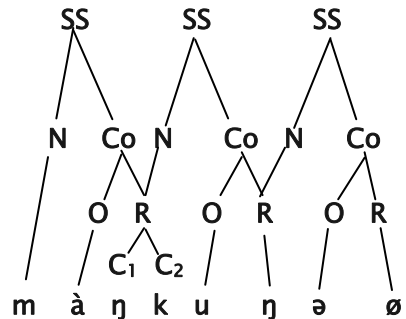
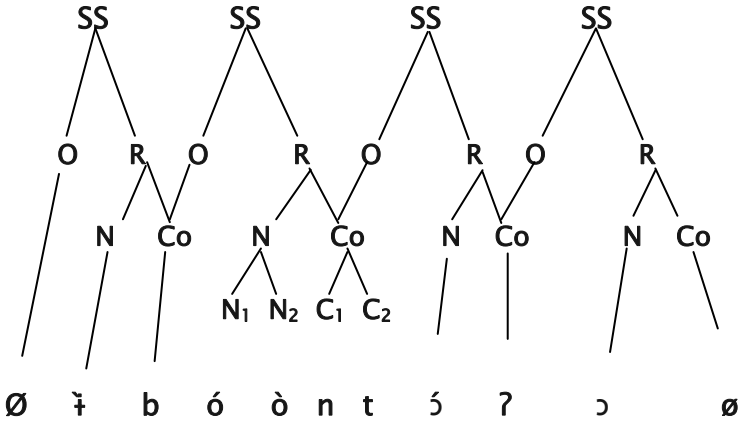


Fig. 9: [ɪbôntʔɔ]



NB: 1) We see from fig. 7, 8, and 9 that a coda (Co) can play the role of an onset (O) to start another syllable in a polysyllabic word. Such codas overlap and we call the syllable ‘geminate’.

2) Where there is more than one element occurring together, we start numbering them from the middle and moving sideways.

3.11. Mankon tonology

Bird (2001: 3) states: “in a tone language, voice pitch on an individual syllable can differentiate lexical or grammatical meaning.” Linguists vary in their opinion whether to mark tone or not. In this section of the book, we are not getting into these bickering by linguists (perhaps we will do that in the next chapter). Suffice it to note that many African languages and others in East Asia

are tonal, but European languages are not. In tonal languages, we have the opposition high (´) vs. low (`) tones in the case of **level tones** or we may have a situation of a “gliding pitch” (Michaelmas 2007) in the case of contour falling tones (^) and rising tones (˘). Mankon has both level and contour tones.

3.11.1. Level tones

In level tones, the contrast is mainly at the level of ‘pitch height’.

29. Level high

- á : tárə (three)
é : màngye (woman)
é : àlém(ə) (blood)
é : ntém(ə) (liver)
í : mbyí(–e) (goat)
í : síŋ(ə) (bird)
ó : fíkón (bean)
ó : ŋgóŋ (termite)
ú : búŋú(–ə) (chimpanzee)

30. Level low

- à : kwa (four)
è : be (people)
è : fíwe (hailstone)
è : ʔílém (witchcraft)
ì : ŋkí(–e) (water)
í : fíndzòŋ (star)
ò : àbòm (catarrh)
ò : ŋgòŋ (stone)
ù : abùŋ(–ə) (slave)

It will be extremely difficult to determine the meaning of these words in citation form if their tones are not marked.

31.

- àkwá (food; pounded cocoyam) vs. àkwà (female name)
ŋgóŋ (termite) vs. ŋgòŋ (stone)

kánǎ (fry) vs. **kàǎ** (squirrel)
ɲkáǎ(ǎ) (money) vs. **ɲkàǎ(ǎ)** (cap/hat)
ɲkwínǎ (to fill container) vs. **ɲkwìnǎ** (hill)
m̩lúʔú (spoons) vs. **m̩lùʔù** (wine)
tsóʔʔ (bush fowl) vs. **tsòʔʔ** (lift)
ntfú (to pay) vs. **ntfù** (adult penis)

3.11.2. Grammatical tones

32.

- a) à **kwě** (ǎ) àfàʔà {He/She came (has come) back from work.} [— ˩ —]
b) á **kwě** (ǎ) àfàʔà He/She is coming from work. [— ˨ —]
c) mà m̩ʔ ɣě (ǎ) àfàʔà (I will go to work) [— ˨ —]

We notice that the perfective tenses: simple past, past perfect and distant past as well as the future tense bear a high tone. However, in the present forms (simple present and present continuous, the verb bears a low tone (See more at 5.8). Therefore, tone determines grammatical tense.

3.11.3. Super high tone

Leroy (1977, 2007) discovered the super high tone in Mankon. This super high tone (↑) she says, is elevated more than the other high tones in the environment. Consider these data:

33.

- a) **sàmbíá** (seven) [— ˨ —]
b) **ntíáʔá mb↓áyé**³⁹ (town) [— — —]

- c) **ɣá kàŋè** (give a squirrel) [— _]
 d) **à ɣá ʔkùŋé** (he has given a bed) [_ \ _] [à ɣàkùŋé]

Compare the high tones in (33a) and (33b) with those in (33c) and (33d). Some high tones of morphemes in the former are realised a bit higher (1) than some in the latter. In (33b), the first H TBU of M₂ is realised with a *downstep* because of the effect of the initial low-toned syllabic nasal (remember, all Mankon syllabic nasals are low-toned, but as we said earlier, we are not to mark them because they are easily predictable; cf 3.2). The TBUs in **kàŋè** in (33c) are normally low-toned, but in the environment of high tones, HTS turns the first TBU of M₂ from low to high (See high tone spread rule at 3.5 above and at *autosegmental* phonology below).

3.11.4. Contour tones

Horn (2002) attests:

In some languages, the contrastive functions of pitch are sometimes played by pitch changes within a pitch syllable.

On his part Hyman commenting on “African Languages and Phonological Theory” states that

...contours seem quite secondary in African tone languages where the primary opposition is between

level tones. Many African languages have only two level tones, high and low.

Both linguists above agree on the fact that tone languages display the phenomenon of contour tones even if these are not seen necessary in some languages. If contours are not necessary in some languages, this is perhaps because they do not play distinctive roles; they are simply there for melody. However, a few words in Mankon must bear a contour tone to orchestrate meaning difference. Let us consider only these few examples:

34. a) **màṅgyé** (woman) vs. **mâṅgyé** (mother to twins)
 b) **ṅgótè** (real) vs. **ḡôtè** (gather)
 c) **ṅǒté** (gathering/meeting)

Word	Tonal effect
i. màṅgyé (woman)	[- ˩] = LH
ii. mâṅgyé (mother to twins)	[˩ ˨˨] = $\widehat{\text{HL}}$ H
iii. ṅgótè (real)	[˩ -] = HL
iv. ḡôtè (gather)	[˩ ˨] = $\widehat{\text{HL}}$ L
v. ṅǒté (gathering)	[˩ ˨˨] = $\widehat{\text{LH}}$ H
vi. ndǎṅnè (bamboo)	[˩ -] = $\widehat{\text{LH}}$ L
vii. ḡbôn (children)	[- ˩] = L $\widehat{\text{HL}}$
viii. b̃bi (cam wood)	[˩] = $\widehat{\text{HL}}$

The falling tone (˩) in (34ii) and (34iv) and the rising tone (˨˨) in (34v) and (34vi) are what we may consider the necessary contours because they bring about meaning

difference. But the majority of contours in Mankon are caused when words are used in environments of connected speech or when open monosyllabic words are said in citation form or at the end of a construct. Words said in citation form or at the end of constructs have the deep structure below. Moreover, these words always have an underlying floating tone (T̃) which is either floating high (H) or floating low (L). Examples:

35. /ndá` a/ → [ndâ] **ndâ** (house)
 /àbó`⁴⁰/ → [àbô] **àbô** (hand)
 /ndzà´ a/ → [ndzǎ] **ndzǎ** (vegetable/broth)
 /bɛ́` a/ → [bɛ̃] **bɛ̃** (camwood)

Hyman (2008:127) states that many East *Grassfields* Bantu languages are dropping their final vowel (schwa) segment, but Mankon still retains hers in many words and has only begun to do so after a nasal⁴¹. However, when there is vowel deletion, the tonal segment remains causing a floating tone. Moreover, this stranded (floating) tone cannot remain unassociated, so docks either to the left or to the right (following the prescriptions of *autosegmental* phonology) causing two phonological phenomena. Let us consider these data:

36. a) (i) /ndá` zǎ` a/ → [ndɛ́á zɛ́á] **ndá za** (the house)
 (ii) /ndá` zǎ` a/ → [ndɛ́á zâ] **ndá za**
 b) /ndá` ʔ zà´ a/ → [ndâzǎ] **ndá zà** (their house)

- c) /ndá` ʔ àzà` a/ → [ndâzà] **ndá àza** (Aza's house)
d) /ndá` ʔ àláʔà` a/ → [ndâláʔà] **ndá àláʔà** (traditional house)

NB: Only the 'surviving' tones (cf 4.3; fig 10) are marked in the contours above.

In (36a.i.) above, the HT of /ndá/ (a class 9 noun) spreads to the next TBU to the right following the HTS principle. Because there is a lexical underlying ʔ between the two morphemes, the HT of the anaphoric demonstrative /zá/ is realized with a *downstep* (↓). There is a second possibility in (36a.ii.) that the ʔ between both morphemes is pushed by HTS of the preceding H TBU to the end of the phrasal construct creating a **contour** on the last TBU (see Tanda et al 2009: 226). The fact that in both cases the lexical ʔ does not dock to the left to create a contour on the TBU of M₁ but associates phonetically to the right, confirms the idea that there is no associative marker (tonal morpheme) between it and the anaphoric demonstrative. In (36b), the underlying ʔ between M₁ and M₂ and the derived ʔ released by the associative marker deletion cause no effect on the TBU of M₂. Instead, both ʔs dock back onto the preceding accessible TBU causing a contour. In (36c) and (36d), we have two nouns each in an associative situation. In either case, we first have an association of the lexical ʔ between N₁ and N₂ to the right and then an associative marker and V₂ (i.e. N₂ nominal prefix) deletion. Later, the ʔs of the deleted vowel, the

associative marker and the lexical ɛ between N₁ and N₂ are now stranded (remember, we can have a couple of ɛs in a sequence in Mankon). The likely TBU on which they can dock in a conjoined manner is the one to the left because it caused the ɛs. This is in line with Clements' and Ford's (1979) stranded tone principle (STP). When this happens, an obligatory contour situation is created. As confirmed by Hyman (paper:15): "A floating L tone is able to block a preceding H from spreading onto a following L, just as it is expected to cause a *downstep* on a following H." Consequently, all the ɛs in (36b, c and d) above, derived or non-derived, block the HT of M₁ from spreading to the right to have a phonetic effect on the L TBUs in (36b and c) or *downstep* the H TBU in (36d).

It should be noted that in phrasal or syntactic open-nucleic constructions, the floating tone shifts to the last syllable of a phrase or sentence (Mfonyam 1989, Neba 2006, Tanda et al 2009). The following can explain this better:

37. a) /ɣá mbó bó` / [ɣá mbó bô] **ɣá mbo bô** (give it to them).

But this shifting of the floating tone does not occur without leaving traces on its path. Let us consider this phenomenon in (37b) and (37c):

$$\text{b) } \left(\begin{array}{l} \text{nd}^{\uparrow}\text{á} \quad \text{` (z}^{\uparrow}\text{á} \quad \text{m}^{\uparrow}\text{é)} \\ \text{nd}^{\uparrow}\text{á} \quad \text{z}^{\downarrow}\text{á} \quad \text{m}^{\uparrow}\text{ê} \end{array} \right) \quad \text{c) } \left(\begin{array}{l} \text{s}^{\uparrow}\text{ŋ} \quad \text{´ (w}^{\uparrow}\text{á} \quad \text{m}^{\uparrow}\text{é)} \\ \text{s}^{\uparrow}\text{ŋ} \quad \text{w}^{\uparrow}\text{á} \quad \text{m}^{\uparrow}\text{é} \end{array} \right)$$

ndá za me
 (*House the where)

→ Where is the house?

sŋ wa me
 (*Bird the where)

→ Where is the bird?

In (37b), the $\downarrow$ *downsteps* the immediate HT as it is pushed by the preceding elevated HT to the end of the construct such that the last TBU in the phrasal construction surfaces with a falling tone. Curiously enough in (37c), because we have a $\uparrow$, the reverse of what goes on in (37b) is obtained i.e. the intonation rises from the second TBU and ends up in an elevated high on the last TBU as the $\uparrow$ spreads to the end of the construct.

After carefully observing the behaviours of the $\downarrow$ s in (36a.i, ii and 37a, b, c) on the one hand and (36b, c, and d) on the other, we can deduce that HTS in the former cases can push a single lexical $\downarrow$ to the right across a CV structure to affect a following TBU. This is not the case in the latter with a low floating tone overload of lexical $\downarrow$ s and derived $\downarrow$ s caused by deletion of associative markers and N_2 nominal prefixes. The conclusion we draw from the above Mankon tonal grammar is that: (1) lexical $\downarrow$ s associate to the right. (2) Derived $\downarrow$ s caused by vowel deletion dock following the STP. (3) If a lexical $\downarrow$ is powerful enough to block a preceding HT from spreading to the right onto a following L TBU, it is itself also blocked from spreading to the right by derived $\downarrow$ s caused by vowel and associative marker deletion. (4) (Related to 3

above) derived ɭs bar a lexical ɭ or ɥ from spreading to the right and force them to dock to the left with them (see 41d below).

All of the above: floating tone (T), high tone spread (HTS), contour tone (CT), *downstep*, vowel elision or deletion; et cetera could be explained thanks to *autosegmental* phonology (which we are going to see below).

3.11.5. Some uses of tone

Tone,

38. *Disambiguates or differentiates words* e.g.

- ⇒ àkwá (pounded cocoyams) vs. àkwa (a female name)
- ⇒ m̃lúʔu (spoons) vs. m̃luʔu (wine)
- ⇒ ɲgɔ́ʔ (termite) vs. ɲgɔ̀ʔ (stone)
- ⇒ tsɔ́ʔ (bush-fowl) vs. tsɔ̀ʔ (to lift)
- ⇒ mbvún(ə) (weed) vs. mbvùn(ə) (grasshopper)
- ⇒ ndvún(ə) (to uproot) vs. ndvùn(ə) (aged)
- ⇒ ɲkwínə (wood) vs. ɲkwìnə (hill)
- ⇒ àbínə tsé (a certain dance) vs. àbín a Tsê (*dance to Tse) → Tse's dance

39. *Indicates tense* e.g.

- a) Má ɣè (á) mutə. → I am going to the market.
 - b) Mà ɣé (a) mutan... → I (once) went to the market...
- (See more at 5.8.)

40. *Determines the mood.*

In English, when one answers a question in the negative with a low tone **No**↓, we know it is a polite refusal. On the contrary, a high tone **No**!↑ will display the interlocutor's anger and

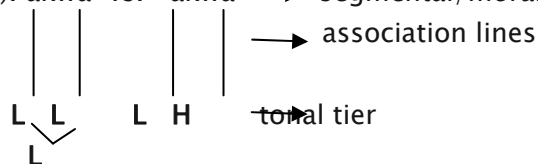
exasperation. The same thing holds true for Mankon: **ngán**.↓ and **ngán**!↑ Furthermore, this intonation is used in Mankon to give commands eg: **mò'ò, bâ, tárè, kwà; zòbè**!↑ (One, two, three, four, sing!)

3.12. *Autosegmental* phonology

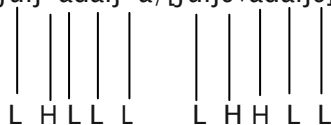
Larry Hyman (paper: 2008:85) classifies *autosegmental* phonology under the metrical, non-linear phonological framework, an improvement on the previous *structuralist* and generative phonologies. He says this phonology “expanded the other two phonologies by incorporating *syntagmatic* representations” thereby facilitating “developments in lexical phonology and prosodic domain theory, which emphasized the relation of phonology and morphology and syntax” (See also Leban 2006: paper and Michaelmas 2007: paper). The idea of *autosegmental* phonology was originally by Goldsmith (1976, 1990).

In brief, Goldsmith’s Universal Association Convention (UAC) identifies two tiers: **segmental/moraic** and **tonal**. The segmental/*moraic* tier has **tone bearing units** (TBUs). The segmental tier is linked to the tonal tier through **association lines**. However, the relationship between the segmental tier and the tonal tier is not always on a one-to-one mapping i.e. this relationship is “semi-autonomous” as a tonal tier can delink from its segmental tier to have a phonetic effect on other surrounding TBUs. The following data in Mankon best explains some of the notions in *autosegmental* phonology:

41. (a). àkwà vs. àkwá → segmental/*moraic* tier with TBUs



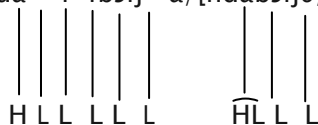
(b). /fùŋ´àdàŋ`a/[fùŋé´ádàŋè]fùŋ-ádàŋə (a pregnant spinster).



(c). i. /ndá`a/[ndâ] ndâ (house)

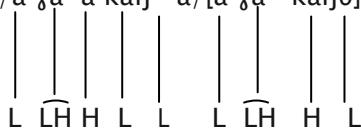
ii. /ndá`ɛ̃ mɛ̃lùʔù/[ndâmɛ̃lùʔù] ndá mɛ̃lùʔu (a wine house)

iii. /ndá`ɛ̃ ɛ̃bòŋ`a/[ndâbòŋè] ndá ɛ̃bòŋə (a house full of beauty/goodness)



(d). /ndzà´ɛ̃ àzà a/[ndzǎzà] ndzǎ azà ⁴² (Aza's soup/broth; vegetable)

(e). /à ɣǎ á kàŋ`a/[à ɣǎ káŋè] à ɣá kàŋə [He/She gave (has given) a squirrel]



Analysis

In (41a) above, the opposition of H vs. L tones brings about a phonemic distinction. When the second syllable is low-toned, the word is **àkwa** 'a female name', whereas it

is **àkwá** ‘food’ – pounded cocoyam – when the second syllable of the word is high.

In (41b), there is HTS to the right according to Hyman’s and Schuh’s (1974:88) HTS rule. This HTS changes the following low-toned TBU of N₂ to H. We must note that the HT on the first syllable of N₂ surfaces as a *downstep* because of the effect of its initial low tone.

In (41c.i.), the morpheme /ndâ/ in citation form surfaces with a longer vowel and contour tone. (Recall that all Mankon monosyllabic open nucleic vowels have these characteristics). However, when this morpheme is used in the environments of other words i.e. inside phrasal or syntactic constructions like we saw in (36a-d) and (37b) above, the morpheme loses its vocalic lengthening or not depending on the context. For example in (36a.i, ii), the vocalic lengthening is no longer perceptible as no contour effect is felt on this TBU. The ɿ between M₁ and M₂ is instead pushed to the right as the HT spreads. The situation is not the same in (36b, c, and d) and (41c.ii.) above because of the presence of a tonal morpheme in addition to the lexical ɿ. In all of these cases, the tonal effect of these ɿs falls back on the preceding TBU (where there is easier access) creating a contour. In (41c.iii.) there is an N₂ nominal prefix /ɿ-/ which obviously is low-toned but it suffers deletion in the area of a preceding contiguous vowel. Furthermore, the stranded derived ɿ of the associative marker hooks up with the derived delinked ɿ of this deleted nominal prefix

and together with the previously existing lexical $\bar{L}$ between N_1 and N_2 (which first associates to the right) all ground to the left on the preceding TBU causing a falling tone following Clements' and Ford's (1979) STP. Recall that no contour is created on the TBU of this morpheme if it is a class 10 noun (see 3.6.2).

What goes on in (41d) is a complex phonological process. Like we saw earlier in the behaviour of class 9 vs. class 10 nouns, /ndzà ' / is a collective plural noun, so belongs to class 10 whose nominal marker is H. Instead of the lexical $\bar{H}$ and the stranded derived $\bar{H}$ (realized due to nominal marker deletion) grounding to the left to cause a complex $\widehat{LH}$ L situation, we first have HTS of these $\bar{H}$ s on the following TBU raising it from L to H. Next, we have a V_2 of N_2 deletion. All three stranded $\bar{H}$ s now ground to the left in a conjoined manner causing a rising tone. Although V_1 now surfaces as $\widehat{LH}$, the HT is the "survival" and prominent tone, (See more at Fig: 10 of 4.3). Compare this situation with /ndzà ' zá/[ndzàzá] ndzà zá (the soup/broth). In the latter case when the morpheme is used with an anaphoric reference, the $\bar{H}$ spreads to the right and so no effect is felt on the next TBU.

In (41e), the rising tone of the verb and the HT of the object marker á spread to the right raising the following L TBU to H in the process⁴³.

The above analysis of Mankon tone behaviour reveals that

- i. the opposition between L and H tones orchestrates lexical and grammatical meaning change. However, some pitch movements only alter the sound effect.
- ii. contour tones also cause meaning difference at the level of some lexemes. Nevertheless, phrasal and syntactic contours are there only for melody when level tones inter-play.
- iii. some high tones appear higher (elevated) than others .
- iv. High tone spread (HTS) raises following low tones to high.
- v. there is *downstep* in Mankon; and that this *downstep* is caused by floating low tones (both derived and non-derived).
- vi. melody plays an important aesthetic and perhaps, mnemonic function in the study of Mankon.

This now leads us to the all-important question: should we or should we not mark all of the above-enumerated features in Mankon tonal orthography? Such questions and others will be addressed in the next chapter.

Notes

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- 1 Conversely, Pinyin in the Upper Ngemba area has a prominence of the [p]. The Mankon word for ‘wing/feather’ and ‘pumpkin’ are **n̄b̄abn̄e** and **n̄b̄ɔʔ**

-
- respectively whereas Pinyin realise both words as **nǐpele** and **nǐpǎo** respectively.
- 2 /pf/ and /kf/ are used interchangeably.
 - 3 This sound could also be realised a voiceless labio-velar affricate [pf] e.g **pfó** or **kfó** (die).
 - 4 NC = syllabic nasal (It can be prefixed or intervocalic).
 - 5 NC [mb-], [nd-] and [nt-] are [+ ant] whereas [ndʒ-], [ŋg-], [ŋk-] and [ŋw-] are [- ant]
 - 6 All other NCs are [+ cor] except [ŋg-], [ŋk-] and [mb-].
 - 7 In (5b.ii.), **mbáŋnt** or **mbáŋnə** is the same referent – man/male - but both words are used in different environments. It is **mbáŋnə** in citation form and at the end of a construct; and **mbáŋnt** in the middle of a construct and when used in a question. E.g. (1) **Ò nǐ mbáŋnə** (You are really a man); (2) **Mbáŋnt za mē** (Where is the man?)
 - 8 Morphemes in Mankon have an underlying toneless /a/ effect in the deep structure at the end of the construct. When the morpheme ends with an open vowel, the /a/ resembles this vowel; when the morpheme ends in a closed vowel apart from /i/, the /a/ becomes /ə/; when the morpheme ends in an /i/, the /a/ effect transforms this latter sound to /ɛ/; after a C2, the /a/ becomes /ə/ but when the C2 is a /n/ and the nuclear vowel open, this nuclear vowel is instead nasalised e.g **ŋkàn** becomes **ŋkə̃** (nest). This /a/ is not represented in the areas of nucleic /ɛ, e, o, ɔ/ (See Leroy in Boyeldieu & Nougayrol 2004 and Leroy 2007).
 - 9 Nouns in Mankon are divided into ten classes. /ø-/ represents an empty morpheme prefix of class 1a; /n-/ is the basic prefix which can be modified through assimilation in the environments of other sounds. This is the prefix for classes 1b, 3b, 9 and 10; /i-/ prefixes classes 3a and 8; /nɪ-/ prefixes class 5; /fi-/ prefixes class 19 nouns while /a-/ prefixes class 7 nouns. Class 1 nouns plural prefix is /bɪ-/ and are in class 2; classes 3, 5 and 19 form their plurals in class 6 whose prefix is /mɪ-/. Class 7 noun plurals are in class 8 and prefixed /i-/ while /n-/ is the plural prefix for class 10. (See more on noun classes at table 15 of 5.3.1.)
 - 10 This morpheme does not have the final schwa because it appears before another morpheme. Conversely, in **Mà kó fuə** (I have caught a rat/mouse); the final schwa is retained (See footnote 2).
 - 11 We talk of deletion when V2 cancels out in favour of V1 and of elision when V1 is swallowed up by V2.

- 12 Note the tone difference between **bó** nominative ‘they’ and **bô** dative ‘them’.
- 13 **kyă** (rake), **ŋkyă** (to rake) and **ngyă** (elder) are analysed the same as **byă**.
- 14 When [i] combines or fuses with the /a/ effect at the end of a construct, the resulting sound is [ɛ].
- 15 Another word that behaves this way is **n̄kió** (lye).
- 16 We notice that when the words /n̄biá/ on the one hand and /ŋkyě/, /mbyě/, /īyě/, /zě, etc on the other are used in the middle of constructs, only the [+high][-back] vowel /i/ is used in either case in place of /ī/ and the [+low][-back] /ɛ/ respectively e.g. (1) **n̄bi ná me** (Where is the kola nut?) and (2) **ŋkyi wá me** (Where is the water?)
- 17 The plural of /mâ/ is /b̄imâ/; that of /tán, tàrì(-ə), tàlì(-ə)/ is /b̄t̄an, b̄tarì(-ə), b̄t̄alì(-ə)/; that of /màngyě/ is /b̄àngyě/; that of /mbáŋn̄/ is /mbáŋn̄/; that of /m̄àngyě/ and /t̄àngyě/ is /b̄m̄àngyě/ and /b̄t̄àngyě/ respectively. But strangely enough, that of /món, múə/ is /b̄bôn/. This is why the plural of /mántɔ̄/ is /b̄bônɔ̄/. (Since Mankon does not have double consonants, the nasal of N1 /b̄bôn/ effaces before the syllabic nasal that starts N2.
- 18 The other free nominal prefixes are /t̄ăn-/ in 1 above and /t̄- / (without) + /ikùm/ as in **t̄-kum** (without a name or nameless), which we ironically name people with.
- 19 Mankon does not accept double contiguous consonants, so the assimilated final N1 consonant elides onto the N2 initial consonant.
- 20 However, these nasalised vowels lose their nasalization and are followed by a homorganic /n/ in interrogative constructions. E.g. **Àban dzá me** (Where is the bag?)
- 21 Cf footnote 5 above.
- 22 See Mankon morphophonemic rules below concerning syllabic nasals.
- 23 Assimilation takes place here. Also, see footnote 30.
- 24 See footnote 46 above. Again, /e/ at times is realized /ɛ/. Another area is **ngyén za** [ngyéndzá].
- 25 See more of the treatment of this rule under ‘tones’.
- 26 In the deep structure, this pronoun anticipates an accusative noun like in (18d) but becomes the subject marker in nominative constructions e.g. **ḡ (á) yīŋə** {Fo (he) has come}.
- 27 See ‘Mankon phonotactics’ below.
- 28 See footnote 9.

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- 29 As an orthographic principle, we do not necessarily write exactly the way we pronounce or pronounce exactly the way we write (See 1930 *African Language Institute*).
- 30 Leroy (2007:72). Because there are no double contiguous consonants in Mankon, there is deletion of the last consonant of N1. This /n/ deletion in **fɪkó** is justified by the fact that it never occurs before a voiceless fricative in Mankon.
- 31 See Leroy 2007:75.
- 32 Note the change from the imperative falling tone to the perfective and infinitive high forms of the verb for open nucleic vowels. (Recall this verb and others in notes 59 and 60 are transitive, reason why we have a high rather than a falling tone.)
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 This verb is intransitive.
- 36 Vowel deletion takes place in this part of the reduplicant.
- 37 All the numerals in Mankon can be used this way.
- 38 See footnote 5.
- 39 The word originates from **ntáʔa** (hill) and **mbáyə** (alligator pepper). Recall that the area **Abakwa** in the Bamenda cosmopolis (before the settlement of the Hausas; cf 1.6.) was a hill where this crop grew in large quantities in bushes around.
- 40 See footnote 35.
- 41 We must note, however, that this final vowel dropping after a nasal is only in the middle of constructs and in interrogative constructions. At the end of constructs and in statements, the final vowel (schwa) is obligatory. E.g (1) **Sɪŋ wa me [sɪŋwámɪ́ɛ]** (Where is the bird?) and (2) **À kó sɪŋə [àkõsɪŋə]** (He/She has caught a bird). Therefore, the dropping or not of the final schwa segment after a nasal is not automatic, but conditioned by a syntactic environment (see also Leroy 2007).
- 42 The floating tone of class 9 nouns is low-toned but high-toned in /ndzà 'a/ which is considered a collective plural noun. In the case of /ndzà '/, the prominent or 'survival' tone is the high tone. (See figure 10 at 4.3.)
- 43 However, if the structure were /à ɣá á àkánə/, the surface realisation would have been [à ɣá↓ákánə] **à ɣá akanə** [He/She gave (has given) a dish.] due to V2 deletion. (The *downstep* is because of the initial low-toned nominal prefix.)

4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, we studied the Mankon sound systems: their realisation, distribution, function, distinctive as well phonetic features. We also analysed the role of tones in changing meaning to a word or grammatical construct or simply as a source of melody. In the hierarchical structure of language study, sound precedes writing. Sound and letters are related, yet separate entities in linguistic analysis. Linguists all agree that the sound, the word and consequently the language are abstract entities; and that which entails abstractness goes with arbitrariness and idiosyncrasy. Indeed, linguists have a job at hand. However, if we admit idiosyncrasy in language, we are not condoning language analytical anarchy. Language is a science with acceptable universals within a frame of reference that could be methodically proven. Our next bid is to, following the general principles of orthography designs; propose orthography for Mankon that is simple, practicable and tenable. Past work on Mankon language concentrated on phonological analysis. Our feeling is that we move from this phonological springboard to introduce a sustainable orthography that would speed up the literacy and pedagogic work on Mankon. This is a daunting task as we

are going to face what Bird (2001) calls ‘identity’ problems. We cannot be blind to these extra-linguistic hurdles but we have to move away from them, deal with the problem directly for the commonwealth of Mankon. It was Bird again who said:

....literacy is closely associated with development. Literacy presupposes the existence of a writing system, and formal orthography design often takes place in this context. A new orthography should not present unnecessary obstacles to the learner who may have severely limited access to the basic pedagogical resources. A new or revised orthography, and the associated pedagogy, should maximally facilitate the widespread acquisition of literacy (Ibid).

4.2. Orthographic principles

The orthography we are going to introduce is based on four primary sources:

- a. “Practical Orthography of African Languages” revised (edition), published by the Oxford University Press, 1930 *International Institute of African Languages*.
- b. *General Alphabet of Cameroon Languages* (Tadadjeu & Sadembouo (1979).
- c. “Orthography and identity in Cameroon”, Bird (2001).

- d. “Strategies for Representing Tone in African writing systems: A critical Review” Bird (1998).

If we revisit the sound system of a language, we will notice that the phoneme is central in orthography designs. Bird (1998:2) conforms this:

With the advent of the phonemic theory there came a widespread acceptance that orthographies should be phonemic, where there is a one-to-one correspondence between phonemes and graphemes.

This gives precedence of the phonemic transcription over the phonetic transcription. However, the phoneme is an abstract unit of language for we do not “hear or pronounce the phonemes of a language; we hear and pronounce their allophones” (Linguistics 201 phonology.htm) and curiously enough, the allophones are variants of the phoneme. What all of this means is that if we take the example of two English phones [p] and [p^h] (non-aspirated and aspirated respectively), we see that both are variants of the distinctive feature (phoneme) we call /P/. Some sounds of a language pose no major problem as they represent both the allophone or the sound and the phoneme without variants (see English [b] vs. /b/, [l] vs. /l/, etc).

In such cases, the symbol for the phone can also be used as the symbol for the phoneme. If there is only

one surface manifestation of a phoneme, then the phonetic symbol for that sound becometh the phonemic symbol as well. (Ibid).

It so happens that in a phonetic transcription, the *transcriber* wants to pick up the narrow fine details of sound, but in a broad-based phonemic transcription, they want but the distinctive features. An African language is already a shallow orthography, and using the phonetic transcription (with all its diacritic marks) makes it shallower with all its debilitating consequences (see ‘orthographic depth’ and ‘The Grain Size Theory’ below). This leaves us with a better alternative that is the phonemic transcription. The problem now is how to represent the phonemic features which differ from language to language and whose choice is very idiosyncratic. The phonetic symbols are general as they appear on an International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The case of African tonal languages is very pathetic for their disparate myriad of sounds from which phonemes must be drawn. Nonetheless, Africans must use their language. They must document/analyse their language as a tool for development literacy and for posterity.

It is with this objective that we have picked up the gauntlet to face this daunting challenge of attempting to narrow down this idiosyncrasy in the Mankon Language through proposing an orthography design that is amenable to language universals, yet preserving African language specificities and

identity. Tadadjeu's & Sadembouo's (1979:2) proposal of a *General Alphabet of Cameroon Languages* leaves this latitude such that

Any Cameroonian can use it (the alphabet) in his effort to learn to read and write his (own language) or any other Cameroon language.

This general alphabet owes its credence to the fact that it takes its rise from the IPA-based 1930 Africa script (Bird 2001:13) which takes care of African language specificities.

Some prescriptions of the *African Institute* really catch our attention:

- i. "The representation of each sound (or rather each phoneme...) by one separately designed letter should be considered as an essential principle of orthography." Wherever this is not applicable, we have to "in some cases... resort to 'diagraphs' or groups of two letters to indicate single sounds". "Diacritic marks have not been altogether banished..."
- ii. Forms of spelling long established in Africa must be maintained.
- iii. An alphabet which radically departs from existing alphabets has little prospect of acceptance.

A critical look at the Mankon sounds we have just discussed shows that we took each letter to represent each phoneme in: a, b, d, e, ε, ə, f, g, γ, ʔ, i, ð, dʒ, k, l, m, n, ŋ, ɲ,

o, ɔ, r, s, ʃ, t, tʃ, u, v, w, y, z, ʒ as stipulated in (i) above. We also used ‘diagraphs’: bv, dv, dz, gv, kf or pf, lv, tf, ts, to ‘indicate single sounds’. Furthermore, we have not departed drastically from existing alphabets (African, English, French, Romanic, etc) as stipulated in (ii) and (iii). Recall, all b, d, f, k, l, m, n, s, t, w, z take after their ‘English’ values, whereas the vowels a, e, i, o, u take after their ‘Italian’ values and then new sounds dʒ, ɣ, ɲ, ʃ, tʃ, ʒ, ʔ and ɛ, ɔ, ə, ɪ are introduced following IPA stipulations. We, therefore, have 31 consonant sounds that represent 31 consonant letters, and 9 vowel sounds that represent 9 vowel letters. In all, we have 40 letters on the Mankon alphabet. Like we are going to discuss under ‘tone orthography’ below, tone-marking is very much reduced but not completely ruled out

The *African Institute* also recommends k^h, p^h, t^h, for aspirated k, p, t. Mankon has two ([k^h] and [t^h]) out of the three aspirated sounds above but does not have the /p/, so, logically no [p^h].

Mankon has palatalised by, ky and ny [ɲ] as prescribed by the *Institute* and affricates: pf, bv, ts, dz. The *Institute* gives the latitude of choice to the transcriber between /tʃ/ or /č/ and /dʒ/ or /ǰ/. All four sounds together with /š/ or /ʃ/ and /ž/ or /ʒ/ appear in many linguistics books, but only /č/, /ǰ/, /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ appear on the IPA chart (also see Hyman 2001: 9 and Yule 1985:39 for the uses of /č/, /ǰ/; /š/, /ž/). In Mankon, we saw that /s/ and /z/ exist already in the language as different phonemes, so the uses of /š/ and /ž/ could confuse with them. This is why

we preferred the sounds ʃ and ʒ respectively. For matters of harmony and consistency with ʃ and ʒ above, we use recommend tʃ and dʒ (typically English IPA) alongside them. The *Institute* prescribed the glottal /ʔ/ but we preferred /ʔ/ that is more legible.

The *Institute* further recommends that nasal vowels diacritic (~) be written above the sounds or if a nasal consonant follows the sound, this is not necessary. This is the approach we have adopted in Mankon with the small difference that the nasal diacritic is preferred below the sound so that it does not burden a tone mark (cf 3.5.1 and 3.5.2.) and the use of a nasalised vowel or not in Mankon depends on the syntactic environment (cf footnote 46).

We also felt that the difference between /ɪ/ and /ɔ/ as used by previous authors on Mankon was not strongly attested; that they could be variants of the same sound.

4.3. Mankon tone orthography

“All the orthographies developed during the colonial period were inspired by colonial languages”

(Bird 2001:7).

However, the orthography of these languages (e.g. Douala in Cameroon) lacked tone because European languages do not have tones. There is an ongoing debate among linguists whether tone should or should not be marked. Each tendency advances cogent arguments to back

their claims. Let us revisit Bird's (1998:2) definition of a tone language as one in which "the pitch of an individual syllable can be contrastive, distinguishing lexical items and grammatical categories such as verb tense".

Pike 1948:36f, Williamson 1984:7f and Mfonyam 1990:23 all agree that if the language is tonal, then there is no question about it; tones must be marked. We agree with them here, else, how can we capture the difference between the Mankon words **àkwà** (a female by that name) and **àkwá** (food: pounded cocoyam) when said in citation form or when in context? Let us examine these morphemes in context in these data:

42.a)/àkwá' àkwà a/[àkwâkwà] **àkwá àkwa** (*Akwa's àkwá*).

b)/àkwà á dzĩ àkwá a/[àkwădzĩ àkwá] **àkwa á dzĩ akwá**

(*Akwa* is eating àkwá)

c)/àkwà á dzĩ àkwá a/[àkwădzĩ↑↓ákwá] **àkwa á dzĩ akwa**

{*Akwa* (ate) has eaten àkwá}

d)/àkwà á mĩ dzĩ àkwá a/[àkwămĩ↑dzĩ ↓ákwá] **àkwa á mĩ dzĩ akwa**

(*Akwa* will eat àkwá)

Although we are no longer doing a phonological analysis in this chapter, it is nevertheless important we briefly illustrate the phonological processes taking place so that we had better understand the context. In (42a), there is first of all V_2 of N_1 elision. The derived H tone spreads through the lexical H onto the low-toned V_1 (nominal prefix) of N_2 causing a falling contour. In (42b), there is a nominal marker deletion causing a H , which docks onto the preceding TBU of N_1 causing a rising contour. The successive LTs of M_1 , M_2 and the nominal prefix of M_3 are only briefly interrupted by the H^1 melody between them. In (42c) we have a divalent verb (see Verb valence at 5.8. below) in the past that surfaces with an elevated HT after a previous rising tone. This elevated H raises a following LT to H . However, this raised HT is *downstepped* because of the initial LT on that segment. Finally in (42d), the H caused by a nominal marker deletion docks onto the preceding TBU causing a rising contour. The future tense is always high-toned (very high indeed) with an insertion of a future time-specific marker / $m\uparrow\uparrow$ / or / $l\uparrow\acute{o}$ /. The elevated high tone really shows this futurity of action. The high tones of the preceding TBUs

¹ In rapid rendition, this H melody is almost swallowed up and lost in the midst of many LTs.

(i.e. the future marker and the verb) raise the initial low-toned nominal prefix of N₂ to H, but the impact of the initial LT is felt in the *downstep* of this HT.

This ongoing analysis to some people, actually demonstrates the imperative tone marking because Mankon is tonal contrasting both lexical and grammatical categories. Else, how could we know (a) we are referring to a [+human] àkwa or a [-animate] àkwá in either case, if we do not from the outset know the meaning of the word /ndzî/ (to eat), or (b) we are changing from one grammatical category to another if tone were never marked?

Apart from determining meaning, proponents of tone-marking orthography argue further that the diacritic marks do not only give melody to the language, but ease reading (pronunciation/fluency) accuracy. Any learner of that language will do so easily following the direction of the marks. These are beautiful enough arguments, are they not?

However, proponents of no orthographic tone marking squash off their beautiful arguments. They argue that tone marking makes the language sloppy. Many African languages (including Mankon) are tone-sandhi. An alternation of the high (H) vs. low (L) tones forming contours at times, burdens the language and makes it an eyesore. They continue to argue that the too many diacritics in a language are not necessary; these are

simply there for ‘melody’ and make an African language orthography that is already shallow, shallower. Recall, a shallow orthography full of diacritics is

- i. not stable as it is vulnerable to changes each time a new language item is added.
- ii. obstructive to meaning as reading will more-or-less be a word-calling exercise without “word imaging”. Remember, it is scientifically proven that reading and meaning are correlatives in which “fixed word images” when decoded reduce the abstractness of the entity and ‘imaging’ meaning in the reader’s psyche. Diacritics help fluency and accuracy in language learning no doubt, but sadly pose a mnemonic obstacle. Do we read just for the melody of it, or and to decipher meaning?

Furthermore, no-tone-marking adherents argue that words do not exist as separate entities, but must be used in context. Context, they say will determine meaning. They are right to some extent when it comes to lexical tone marking; but for grammatical tone marking, I wonder if context can determine meaning if the tones are not marked. Let us revisit the Mankon example in (42b, c, d): The grammatical category /dzɛ́/ or /ndzɛ́/ can only go with a [+animate] subject. Because **àkwa** is [+animate] and **àkwá** is [–animate], our ‘word imaging’ tells us that at the nominative position the lexeme must be **àkwa** and not **àkwá**. It is not syntactically and paradigmatically

correct for an àkwá to dzɪ an àkwa. The African Institute further buttresses these notions when it says:

In books for Africans, tones, generally speaking, need only be marked when they have a grammatical function, or when they serve to distinguish words alike in every other aspect; and even then they may be sometimes omitted when the context makes it quite clear which word is intended. As a rule, it will suffice to mark the high or the low tone only.

However, context does not work in all the cases. Consider the Mankon noun forms **màngyé** (woman) and **mângyé** (mother to twins). How can we identify either word at the nominative, accusative or dative positions if tones were never marked? In this case, tone marking will not deter and impair intelligibility, but foster it.

Some linguists believe that in order to reduce tone marking; we can omit either the low or the high tone. This can never work with Mankon where there is an alternation of level tones forming contours. Some of these contours on a segment distinguishing meaning must be marked. Were we to choose to omit either the high or the low tone, how then do we handle these contours?

Bird (1998 and 2001) carried out a language experiment on Dschang and found out that

... the current phonemic tone marking system for the Dschang language degrades reading fluency and does not help to resolve tonally ambiguous words.... The experiment raised serious doubts about the suitability of the phonemic method of marking tone for languages that have pervasive phrase-level tone sandhi effects.... Only a handful of people have ever learnt to write the tone marks accurately. One man with some years of experience teaching the orthography reported that he usually writes the letters of the whole sentence or paragraph before going back to mark the tones.

The assertion of the Dschang *orthographer* makes total derision on tone marking. In Mankon, however, we are not going to ban it outright: we will rather adopt a sort of **tone-marking democracy** where only the ‘necessary’ (Tadadjeu & Sadembouo 1979) tones will be marked. We will be guided by the fact that if tone is not marked in a language, time and acquisition will gradually build in competence in the learner. In an L₁ situation, the young child gradually acquires the good language (including proper pronunciation) from its parents. A foreign learner of that language does not learn it alongside the complicated pronunciation patterns. The latter language aspects come with time when the learner must have learned the other aspects of the language. Through a system of repetition and practice with language

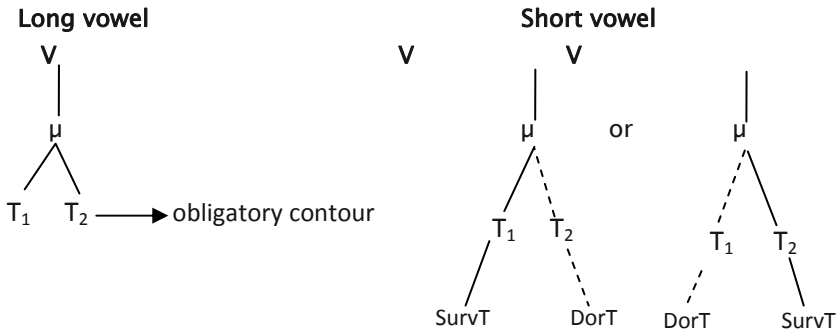
connoisseurs, they can acquire the acceptable and functional standard. On the other side of the fence, we will be guided by the fact that some words in Mankon naturally must be marked if we must get their meaning. Equally, grammatical tense tone must be marked. If we revisit these Mankon words, we will realise that Mankon has a long vowel:

43. **mângyé** (mother to twins); compare with **màngyé** (woman)
ngôtè (to gather); compare with **ngótè** (real)
ngǒtè (gathering); compare with the two words above.
ndǎngnè (bamboo); compare with **ndéngè** (hang)
ndâ (house); compare with **ndà** (lobe, especially of kola nut)
ĩbôn (children)
bî (cam-wood); compare with **bî** (then), **bĩ** (they)
tân (five)
(n)tô {(to) bore a hole}

The words with obligatory contour tones are few and can be learnt by rote and their tones marked. This is because these contour tones bring about change in lexical meaning. Conversely, boundary contours do not bring about meaning change; they are there for melody. In the case of a boundary contour, only the tone that survives could be marked. We share with Horn's (2002) argument on the necessity of a contour tone when he

quotes Trubetzkoy 1939, McCawley 1968, Newman 1972, Hyman 1985, McCarthy and Prince 1986, Zec 1988, Hayes 1989, Duanmu 1990, 1994a, Odden 1995, that “... each *mora* can only be associated with one tone”. This presupposes that “a contour tone can only occur on a phonemic long vowel, which has two *moras*, but not on a phonemic short vowel, which has only one *mora*” (Ibid.P.3). Furthermore, he opines, the Optimality Theory (OT) markedness constraint “bans many-to-one mappings between tones and *moras*”. On the other hand, the Faithfulness Constraint (FT) prescribes **MAX (tone) marking: if tone is in the input, then it must also be in the output**. From the two arguments, Horn prescribes something like the ‘tone-marking democracy’ that we proposed earlier in this section: “... when two tones are associated with a short vowel underliningly, only one tone will survive on the surface..., but when they are associated with a long vowel, both tones can survive”. Indeed, the contours (both $\overline{\text{HL}}$ and $\overline{\text{LH}}$) in (43) above survive because the TBUs are realised with some length, and they also distinguish meaning, so must be marked. Conversely in boundary contours, even if their TBUs are realised with some degree of length, the length simply plays a phonetic and not a phonemic role, so only the ‘survival’ tone, (SurvT) in this case, the input tone could be marked, and the other remains the dormant tone (DorT). We now capture the rule as below:

Fig. 10



Let us refer again to the data at (42) above. A closer look at these data with the numerous diacritics can be an eyesore. We have LTs, HTs, Ts, ts and even ls in this language. This will be too much for Mankon to swallow. Our bid now is to come up with a rule based on our ‘tone-marking democracy’ that can reduce the tones to a minimum that can be sustainable, yet not deleterious to meaning. A bid that will avoid the

.... ‘pepperbox’ spelling system..., with accents peppering the page, burdening readers and writers with an unnecessary cognitive and mechanical load (Bird 1998)

4.4. Ways of limiting tone marking in Mankon

We have seen earlier how to avoid the ‘unnecessary’ boundary contours in Mankon by marking only the survival tone. Furthermore, we feel that an **elevated** high

makes a HT higher and a *downstepped* HT simply reduces the pitch height from somewhere between high and low i.e. to a mid tone. However, mid tones do not exist in Mankon. This leaves us with the idea that if we are not burdening the language by marking ↑s and ↓s, then we will simply consider both as allophonic H and so we mark high (when necessary). What we mean is that morphophonemic tone-marking *downstep*, *upstep* and boundary contour/modular should be ruled out in the orthography because they contribute only to melody. Melody no doubt is an important function of a language but that will come naturally with time and language maturation. The functionality of a language should be given priority to the melodies and cadences.

Taking out the above boundary melodies and leaving in all the level tones is not sufficient. The ratio of H vs. L tones in Mankon is about 50:50. If we took Pike's (1947:222) tone marking proposal of omitting the most occurring tone or Wieseemann's et al (1983:156) method of writing only the tone that changes the least, this leaves Mankon the choice of either the LT or HT in the first case and only the LT in the second because it is the HT that is generally unstable (due to *downsteps* and *upsteps* in Mankon). Because of the tone-sandhi effect of Mankon, whether we mark the LT or HT, we will still have too many L or H tone marks in the language. In addition, single TBU contours could have been difficult to handle (see 43 above).

A compromise choice and which is in line with our ‘tone marking democracy’ is a combination of Williamson’s (1984:43) marking of the tone of a syllable that is different from the tone of the preceding syllable and Hyman’s (1988) and Jenewari’s (1989:113) marking only the first word in a tone group. These methods are very good as they make use of tone spread. Let us now compare this ‘tone-marking democracy’ with ‘shallow tone-marking’ in Mankon.

Shallow tone-marking	Reduced tone-marking
44. i. ngôṭè ngǒṭé	ii. ngôṭə ngǒṭə
45. i. àkwá àkwà àkwà á dzɪ̃ àkwá àkwà á dzɪ̃f ákwá àkwà á mɪ̃f dzɪ̃f ákwá	ii. àkwá àkwa [_] àkwa á dzɪ̃ akwá [_ ˉ] àkwa á dzɪ̃ akwa [_ —] àkwa á mɪ̃ dzɪ̃ akwa [— —]
46. i. mà ɣɛ ntɪ́áʔá mbɪ́áyó {I (once) went to town.} má ɣɛ ntɪ́áʔá mbɪ́áyó (I am going to town.)	ii. mà ɣɛ ntaʔa mbaɣə má ɣɛ ntáʔa mbaɣə
47. i. mbá wá mē (Where is the man?) ndzǎ zá mē [ndzǎ¹ zá mē] (Where is the broth/vegetable?)	ii. mbá wa me ndzǎ za me
48. i. ká bɪ̃ ndzɔʔɔ yé fɪ̃ ndzéɣɪ̃ mbó (á) (ɪ̃)fyē (proverb n° 12)	

ii. **ká b̃ ndzɔ́ɔ ʏɛ f̃ ndzéɣɪ mbo (a) (i)fye**

We can see clearly by comparing the shallow tone marking in (44i), (45i), (46i), (47i) and (48i) with their reduced ‘democratic tone marking’ counterparts in (44ii), (45ii), (46ii), (47ii) and (48ii) that ‘tone-marking democracy’ should be the compromise. With this method, distinctive lexical and grammatical tones are marked without burdening the learner with too many tone diacritics. Also, consider these:

49. **Mà ʏɛ mutə** → (declarative) I am going to the market.
50. **Ó ʏɛ mutan** → (interrogative) Are you going to the market?
51. **ʏɛ mutə** → (imperative) Go to the market!
52. **Mà kfó !** → (exclamative) I am dead!

Therefore, when tone is marked this way, a compromise is struck between proponents of high or low tone omission and each tendency is represented in a less harmful way. Equally, advocates of *autosegmental* phonology will have their hearts’ desires as they see tone spread. This tone-marking approach is simple, practical and tenable in Mankon tonal pedagogy and will encourage our young learners to learn the language and be not scared by this “diacritic overload”. Let us allow the other complicated *tonological* gymnastics to linguistic *scientific laboreemics*.

4.5. Orthographic Depth vs. Grain Size Theory

A word, an “abstract mental entity which matches forms and meanings” (Bird 1998) is central in the Orthographic Depth Hypothesis. *Orthographers* have the latitude to or not to spell out the way a word has to be pronounced in the orthography. The orthographic depth of a language “judges how close or not” such orthography is with its sound system. A language in which there is a “close one-to-one mapping” between the word and the sound is known as a **shallow** or **phonemic orthography**. (African tonal languages are essentially shallow). A language that only approximates this one-to-one mapping between sound and spelling has a **deep orthography** (e.g. English). Such a language is inconsistent in its grapheme vs. phoneme representation. Lieberman et al (1980: 147) as quoted by Steven Bird states:

Orthography depth depends upon two variables: the depth of the morphophonological representation itself and the degree to which the orthography approximates this representation. If the morphophonological representation is quite close to the phonetic representation, the orthography will, of course, be close as well. The reader needs to know little phonology because there is little phonology to be known.

Furthermore, some languages may be inconsistent in their “morphophonological representation” but very consistent in their “morphological composition”. Such a language again is English as compared to some African tonal languages (Mankon inclusive) which have “triconsonantal” root complexes. When the morphological composition is complex, so too will be the “morphological decomposition”.

The Grain Size Theory (by Usha Goswami and Johannes Ziegler) improves on the orthographic depth theory in that it goes beyond the grapheme to phoneme mapping to examine the size of the inconsistency (the grain size) vis-à-vis the ease or difficulty of reading. Like we said before, reading is a correlative to meaning: the greater the grain size, the greater the difficulty in “word imaging” for meaning, as:

Reading in consistent orthographies involves small linguistic units, whereas reading in inconsistent orthographies requires the use of larger units, as well as smaller units... there are more orthographic units to learn when the grain size is big than when the grain size is small.

When we apply both theories to Mankon, we draw the following conclusions:

- i. As a tonal language, it is a shallow orthography; therefore the grain size is small. That means reading

and learning Mankon would be easier as Mankon children or foreigners will not face the problems of availability, consistency and granularity² since they will not need “larger sublexical reading units...to resolve inconsistencies in grapheme to phoneme mapping”.

- ii. Zero tone marking will not be advisable, as it will serve only as a makeshift to compensate for the lack of depth in the orthography. (Recall, shallow orthographies are less stable. Let us not talk about the problem of identity here).
- iii. Shallow tone marking could be a boomerang. If we left aside the eyesore “peppering of the page”, to attack the motive of ease of reading for distinctive meaning advanced by adherents of exhaustive tone-marking, we would realise the latter ironically defeats the aim it set out for. (cf. Bird’s Dschang experiment on tone marking). A diacritics “overload” of high tones, low tones, contours, *downsteps* and *upsteps* instead of being an aid to reading and distinguishing lexical and grammatical meaning, will reduce to a deterrent tongue twister with the learner concentrating on melodious word-calling to the detriment of “word imaging” for meaning.
- iv. (Related to iii above) The excessive diacritics will further increase the ‘grain size’ leading to an increase in inconsistencies and an increase in inconsistencies

culminates in idiosyncrasies which makes a language unstable. An OECD–CERI recommendation states that

... shallow orthographies are a real advantage in terms of acquiring reading proficiency for both normal and dyslexic³ children. Countries with deep orthographies might possibly begin to consider the political and societal feasibility of implementing orthographic reforms.

It is instead ironical that when users of languages with a large grain size and inconsistent orthography are striving to improve on the readability of their orthographies, tonal language orthographies (which are inherently shallow) are being made difficult to read. Designers of these tonal languages are trying to make for what they lack in terms of phonemic depth through gratuitous diacritic tonal overload.

In the foregoing, we have argued that a simple, clear and practicable orthography (in both graphemes and tones) will facilitate Mankon literacy development that will in turn foster economic and social development. In the next chapter, we will examine the Mankon word structure (morphology) and illustrate how morphemes combine for meaning.

Notes

- 1 T2 is the ‘surviving’ T and could only be the one marked. (Moreover, the contour does not play any phonemic role here like in other words seen earlier.)

- 2 Problems of 'availability' involve the lack of phonological units to connect with the printed units; those of 'consistency' involve the greater or lesser degree of match between the printed unit (spelling) and pronunciation; and the problems of 'granularity' involve the learning of many units or 'grain sizes' in deep orthographies.
- 3 Dyslexia is a neurological impairment that causes the sufferer not to be able to 'segment spoken words into phonological parts and link each letter to its corresponding sound' (OECD-CERI report 2005: 10).

5.1. The notion of morphology

Morphology in biology is the scientific ‘study of forms’ of plants and animals (matter). Nevertheless, in linguistics, it is the analysis of language elements. In our earlier analysis, we examined the phonological (sound) level of language investigation. At the morphological level, our analysis is based on ‘words and phrases’ that make up a sentence. We shall call this the ‘intermediate level’ of analysis of these ‘elements’. The elements investigated at this level are called **morphemes**. A morpheme is a ‘minimal unit of meaning or grammatical function’.

When a nominal prefix morpheme (bound for the most part) is removed from the stem/root/base, the latter is also bound (i.e. has no meaning). We can call this a ‘bound stem/root/base’ (see Yule 1985:61). However, with derived nouns, the nominal prefix is bound whereas the root/stem/base is free. Mankon has a few cases of free nominal prefixes (cf 3.5.1). These notions and more will be explained in the course of this chapter.

5.1.1. Derivational morpheme: This morpheme is used through the process of derivation to create new words that have a grammatical function different from the stem/root.

5.1.2. Inflectional morpheme / declension: This type does not create new words but is used to indicate aspects of grammatical function, that is, whether the word is plural, singular, past tense or not, comparative form, passive form, concord or gerund.

5.1.3. Free morpheme: A free morpheme is one that can stand on its own as a word. Examples are [ndâ] (house), [yínə] (come!), etc

5.1.4. Bound morpheme: This morpheme cannot stand on its own as a word. Therefore, it is attached to a root/stem/base. A bound morpheme is naturally an **affix** (cf **affixation** in 5.1.7 below). Examples of bound morphemes in Mankon are prefixes: à-, n/ŋ-, ɪ-, bɪ-, m-, mɪ- and suffixes: -ə, -nə, -nɪ, etc. (See suffixes later at 5.6; Table 20).

53.

- [kwáʔanə] (tempt) + [a-] = [àkwaʔanə] (temptation).
- [ŋkyi(-ɛ)] (water + ø (plur.) = [ŋkyi(-ɛ)] = (uncountable N.)
- [ŋkyi(-ɛ)] (stream / river / pool / lake / ocean) + [mɪ-]
= [mɪŋkyi(-ɛ)] i.e. (various streams / rivers / pools / lakes / oceans).
- [àtséʔɛ] (piece of cloth) + [ɪ-] = [ɪtséʔɛ] (clothes).
- [ŋkùm(ə)](noble) + [bɪ-] = [bɪkùm(ə)] (nobles).
- [ndɔ̃rɪ(ə)](garland) = [mɪ-] = [mɪndɔ̃rɪ(ə)] (garlands).
- [mà kɪ (tʃi)] (past marker) **ŋgə a mutə (a) ɪ-zô**
(I went to the market yesterday.)

In rapid speech rendition, the prepositional marker (a) above could be elided. Nevertheless, in deep structural analysis, it must be there.

→ [mbáŋnɪ tɪ nda ka (a)¹ be yi ŋwò].

(A man without a house / compound is nobody).

Again, in the example above, the personal pronoun marker (a) can be elliptical (though not its tone) without impairing intelligibility in rapid rendition. In all the examples above, we can easily discern that Mankon nominal prefixes *sa* [tɪ–] and *ma* [mâ–] are all bound morphemes.

5.1.5. Lexical Morpheme: A free morpheme is an example of a lexical morpheme.

5.1.6. Functional morpheme: This is a functional word in a language. Examples are conjunctions, adjuncts, prepositions, articles and pronouns.

Mankon:(a) [a]. This is a *functor* serving as (i) a preposition and (ii) a pronoun for humans and some non-humans (cf 7.3.).

54.

(b) [ɪ] is (i) a pronoun for non-humans and some humans (cf 7.3.).

(c) [bô, bɔʔ] (and)

- (d) [lá] (but)
- (e) [mú] (in)
- (f) [mbɪʔəke] (because)
- (g) [tám(ə)] (*loan* = time)
- (h) [mpfú za (mbaʔa), nóm wa (mbaʔa)] (when)
- (i) [zè] (which)
- (j) [nɪ] (with)
- (k) [wá], [zá] (relative pronoun)
- (l) [wú] (indefinite article reference)
- (m) [wá] (definite article reference)

5.1.7. Affixation: This is a derivational process of forming new grammatical words by:

- (a) **prefixing**
 - (b) **infixing**
 - (c) **suffixing**
- } little 'bits' of bound derivational morphemes to the stem or root.

● Infixation exists in other languages but not in Mankon and English.

55.

Ká	bɪ	n-	(d)zɪʔ	yi	a	ɪ
Not	they	(morphophon)	rub/smear	themselves	(obj. pron.)	king/chief
deriv.morph.	funct.morph.	funct.morph.	lex.morph.	funct.morph.	funct.morph.	lexicalmorph.

n-	(d)zégɪ	m-	bo	a	ɪfye.
(morphophon)	wipe/clean	plur. marker	hand	(locative)	ground.
funct.morph.	lexical morph.	inflect.morph.	lexical morph.	funct.morph.	lexical morph.

Morphophon = morphophonemic

→ They do not enthrone their king and (after) wipe/clean their hands on the ground (proverb n° 12)

5.2. Word formation

A language is never static but dynamic. One of the attributes of a language is that it is a system of borrowing, i.e. languages borrow from others to add to their already existing store of knowledge. This presupposes that some form of language existed in a given society (created by members of that society), but historical and geographical evolution cause that language to change at the level of lexis, pronunciation and spelling to adopt other forms. Though languages change according to the aspects mentioned above, one area – syntax (structure) – is resistant to change. The SVO structure is predominant in many languages. The structural order may change in some cases, but the constituent parts (S., V., Adj., Adv., N. Phrase, V. Phrase, etc) must exist in a language. Over the ages, there is an on-going debate as to the source/origin of human speech. My penchant is for the divine source of language. Yes, God must have imparted a language structure and ability in the minds of His first creations. As these creations spread and evolved, they created more sounds and names (referents) for their various objects (the referred) following their local realities, but the structural components and constituents of their languages remain same.

Were it not so, what then accounts for the similarity between an English, French, German, etc and Mankon sentence construction? If we were to go by history, we will realise that the first real African contacts with the West were between the 17th and 19th centuries through slave trade, imperialism, etc. However, the Mankon as well as other Cameroonian and African societies including those of the West had their various languages that date from time immemorial. Moreover, these languages are used to date with the same structure (albeit these changes in vocabulary items and pronunciation). On what or whom can we impute this structural similitude if not the Almighty?

Word-formation in Mankon like in many other languages can be achieved through:

5.2.1. Loaning / Borrowing

Table 13:

N°	Mankon Loan word	Source of Loan
1	tám(ə)	time
2	Kásara	cassava
3	Àṅgwáfa	guava
4	ṅgaré	garri
5	búsi(-ə)	pussy (cat)
6	byâ	pear (avocado)
7	mánggòrə	mango
8	Káwò	cow

9	fúrisigara	forest-guard (eucalyptus)
10	bórè* ¹	ball
11	təbəra* ²	table
12	bòbô	paw-paw
13	mátò* ³	motor (car)
14	ŋgàlúm(ə)	guardroom (cell)
15	àfúʔənəbvue	Fernando Pô
16	búrisĩ(-ə)	police

*The traditional Mankon words for these loans are:

*1 = àtám-adʒi(ə), *2 = àtékè, *3 = àbáŋə-ɪʃye.

NB: These loans and others should be used without any bias or prejudice.

5.2.2. Compounding

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- (a) [záʔa] (liberal -V/Adj.) + [nĩman(ə)] (wildcat - N) = [àzáʔanĩmàn(ə)] (coquette -N).
- (b) [fĩŋ(ə)] (dark - Adj.)+ [tsĩŋ(ə)] (intensifier) = [àfĩŋətsĩŋ(ə)] (complete dark person/thing -N).
- (c) [mâ] (mother/female - N) + [-ŋgyé] (twins* - N) = [mâŋgyé] (twin-mother - N).
- (d) [tǎ] (father/male - N) + [-ŋgyé] (twins* - N) = (tǎŋgyé] (father of twins - N).
- (e) [ŋwò] (person) - N) + [ŋkáb(ə)] (money - N) = [ŋwòŋkáb(ə)] (rich person - N).
- (f) [máʔa] (throw - V) = [nĩkɔŋ(ə)] (spear - N) = [àmaʔanĩkɔŋ(ə)] (spear thrower - N).

- (g) [tán] (elder – N) + [nɪkfú(ə)] (quarter – N) = [tánɪkfu(ə)]
(quarter head – N).
- (h) [tém(ə)] (stand; wait; walk – V) + [dórə] (happy – Adj.) =
[àtéməndorə] (highway; street – N).
- (i) [àbáŋ(ə)] (attic – N) + [nɪkán(ə)] (sky – N) = [àbáŋ-nɪkan(ə)]
(aeroplane – N).
- (j) [tán(ə)] (dispute – V) + [ntsô] (war/dispute – N) = [átán-
ntsô] (name; warrior/garrulous person – N).
- (k) [kwé] (go home – V) + [àfon] (farm – N) = [ɛkwé-àfon]
(evening² – N).
- (l) [món] (child – N) + [ntɔʔ] (palace – N) = [mántɔʔ]
(prince/princess – N).

** We are only postulating in (c) and (d) above that at some diachronic stage in the development of the language, the root /-ɛgyé/ could have meant “twins” (cf 3.5.1).*

5.2.3. Affixation

Table 14:

N°	Source Word	Meaning	Function	Derivational Morpheme	Derived Noun	Meaning
1	kwaré	flirt/ prostitute	Verb (V)	à-	àkware	prostitute/flirt
2	záʔa	be liberal	V	à-	àzaʔa	a coquette
3	zɔbə	sing	V	à-	àzɔbə	song/singing
4	ɲwáʔa	-variegated -multicoloured	Adj:	à-	àɲwaʔakwaŋ(ə)	variegated object/thing/ animal.
5	ɲwáʔanə	write	V	à-	àɲwaʔanə	a book/school(ing)
6	támə/támtə	-deceive -trap	V	n-	ntámə/ntámtə	deceit/deceiver /deceitful person
7	byéʔε	carry	V	m-	mbyéʔε / mbyèʔεnə	carrier/ shoulder(s)*
8	kwéntə	serve	V	n-	nkwèntə	servant
9	yíŋə	come	V	ŋg-	ɲgýíŋə	Comer

10	zónɛ	follow	V	nd-	ndzòŋɛ	-tail (i.e. one who tails) -follower
11	túʔɛ	scoop	V	n-	ntúʔɛ	a scoop
12	kwé	go home	V	ŋ-	ŋkwé-afon	evening
13	ké	-tired -tiring	Adj.	n̄-	n̄kɛ́	tiredness
14	lvúʔɛ	-churn -stir	V	n̄-	n̄lvúʔɛ	spoon
15	lvùŋé	-old -age	-Adj. -V	n̄-	n̄lvunɛ	old-age
16	ɣámé	talk	V	n̄-	n̄ɣamɛ	speech/ language
17	tʰŋé	strong	V	m̄- n-	m̄tʰŋɛ ntʰŋɛ	-strength -strongman
18	dzɛ́ɛ	eat	V	m̄- ɣ-	m̄dzɛ́ɛ ɣdzɛ́ɛ	-food -termites/white ants
19	dórè	-be happy -joy	V	n̄-	n̄dórè	happiness / joy
20	témè	-walk -wait	V	n̄-	n̄témè	-walking -waiting
21	tɛʔɛ	support / prop	V	n-	ntɛʔɛ	a support / prop

22	bɔŋ(ə)	good	Adj.	ɔ̃-	ɔ̃bɔŋ(ə)	goodness
23	bɔŋ(ə)	-good -tasty	Adj.	ɔ̃-	ɔ̃bɔŋə	-a bad person / thing -tasteless
24	ɔ̃kúm(ə)	name	N	ɔ̃-	ɔ̃kúm(ə)	without a name (ironically a name).
25	ɔ̃ɔ̃-ɔ̃bɔŋə	know- (good)	V	ɔ̃-	ɔ̃ɔ̃ɔ̃-ɔ̃bɔŋə	He / She does not know that which is good.
26	kwáʔanə	tempt/test	V	à-	àkwaʔnə	temptation/exam

*The Mankon traditional body part to carry a load is the shoulder(s).

As seen earlier in (5.1.7.), words are derived in Mankon through prefixing. All of these words are nouns derived from verbs and adjectives which are transformed by prefixing the nominal markers: à-, ɪ-, m-, n-, ŋ-, fɪ-, n(d)-, mɪ- and nɪ-. Another set of nouns is derived from nouns, verbs and adjectives by prefixing the negative marker tɪ-. May I recall that all words beginning with à-, ɪ-, m-, n-, ŋ-, fɪ-, n(d)-, mɪ-, nɪ- and tɪ- are nouns. (See examples in the table below.) Nevertheless, make no mistake to over-generalise hastily that all the nouns that begin with the above prefixes are derived from other words. For example, [àláj(ə)] (chair) does not come from [láj(ə)] + [a-]. The word [láj(ə)] exists quite all right, but it is an intransitive verb meaning, “stop crying”. This is the same with the English Language for we know many verbs are derived from nouns and adjectives, but we cannot over-generalise and say all verbs come from nouns. Let us take these three English examples:

(a) beauty (N) + -ify (suffix) = beautify (V).

(b) simple (Adj.) + -ify (suffix) = simplify (V).

*But (c), is qualify (V) derived from ‘qual’ + -ify?

5. • : Parts of speech/Word classes

5. • :1. Nouns

Mankon is a nominal class language with ten nouns grouped into two forms: the singular/plural for countable nouns and the singular or plural form for uncountable

nouns (Leroy 1977 and 2007). We can determine a noun group from its nominal prefix. Thus, a noun has a prefix followed by a stem/root/base. Of all the noun groups, six designate the singular and four, the plural. The odd number classes: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 19 are singular nouns while the even numbers: 2, 6, 8 and 10 are the plural noun classes. The noun classes vary according to the classes and their determiners. Class 1a nouns with nominal prefix /ø-/ and class 1b with nominal prefix /n-/ , form their plurals with class 2 nouns whose nominal prefix is /bĩ-/. Classes 3a, 3b, 5, and 19 nouns with nominal prefixes /ĩ-/, /n-/, /nĩ-/ and /fĩ-/ respectively form their plurals at class 6 with nominal prefix /mĩ-/. Class 7 nouns with nominal prefix /à-/ form their plurals at class 8 with nominal prefix /ĩ-/ while class 9 nouns with nominal prefix /n-/ form their plurals at class 10, but both singular and plural forms for these nouns do not change.

Table 15: Noun classes in Mankon

Cl 1a /ø- /			Cl 2 /bi- /		
Morpheme (sing.)	Demonstrative		Morpheme (plur.)	Demonstrative	
	the	this	that	the	those
Kàkfufnam (pig)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	bá	bén/bínə
Ànto	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	bá	bén/bínə
àngábɪ (antelope)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	bá	bén/bínə
màngyé (woman)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	bá	bén/bínə
màngyé (mother to twins)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	bá	bén/bínə

tǎngyé (father to twins)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	bǝtǎngyé	bá	bén/bínə	bí/bíri
tàrə (father)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	bǝtarə	bá	bén/bínə	bí/bíri
sínj (bird)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	bǝsínj	bá	bén/bínə	bí/bíri
búǝu (chimpanzee)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	bǝbúǝu	bá	bén/bínə	bí/bíri
tsǝǝ (bush fowl)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	bǝtsǝǝ	bá	bén/bínə	bí/bíri
Àzâ (female by that name)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	b(ɬ) Àzâ	bá	bén/bínə	bí/bíri
Tsê (male by that name)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	bǝ Tsê	bá	bén/bínə	bí/bíri

CI 1b /n-/				CI 2 /bt-/			
ndóm (husband)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	b̥lóm (husbands)	bá	bén/bínə	bí/bíri
ndèm (witch /wizard)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	b̥ləm	bá	bén/bínə	bí/bíri
ηkùm (noble)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	b̥kum	bá	bén/bínə	bí/bíri
fɔ̃ (king)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	b̥fɔ̃	bá	bén/bínə	bí/bíri
ɲónə (mother-in-law)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	b̥ɲónə	bá	bén/bínə	bí/bíri
ηkfú (ghost)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	b̥ɪkfú	bá	bén/bínə	bí/bíri
ηwò (person)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	b̥(ɪ)én [béɪm]	bá	bén/bínə	bí/bíri
món (child)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	ʔb(ɪ)ôn [ʔbmóm]	bá	bén/bínə	bí/bíri

súnj (friend)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	b̥súnj	bá	bén/bínə	bí/bíri
nòm (time as on the face of the clock)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	b̥nom (e.g 2, 3, 4, etc o'clock)	bá	bén/bínə	bí/bíri
CI 3a /ɬ- /				CI 6 /mɬ- /			
ɬbɔʔɔ (mushroom)	wá	wén/wínj	yí/yíri	mɬbɔʔɔ (mushrooms)	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
ʔʃí (face)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	m̥ʃí	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
ʔkon (bed)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	m̥ko	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
ʔlənɟ (palm wine source)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	m̥lənɟ	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri

ʔfom (farm)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	m̩ʃo	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
(ɨ)mbán̩ (palm tree)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	m̩mbán̩	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
(ɨ)mbúbə (male rat)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	m̩mbúbə	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
ʔkʂɔ (ladder)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	m̩kʂɔ (ladders)	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
CI 3b /n-/				CI 6 /m̩t-/			
ŋgáɾɨ (gun)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	m̩ŋgáɾɨ (guns)	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
ŋkyi (river/stream)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	m̩ŋkyi	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
ŋgàŋ (root)	wá	wén/wínə	yí/yíri	m̩ŋgàŋ	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri

CI 5 /nɪ- /				CI 6 /mɪ- /			
n̩bɔʔ (pumpkin)	ná	nén/nínə	ní/níri	m̩bɔʔ (pumpkins)	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
n̩babnɪ (wing)	ná	nén/nínə	ní/níri	m̩babnɪ	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
n̩fu (feather)	ná	nén/nínə	ní/níri	m̩fu	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
n̩dɪɪ (eye)	ná	nén/nínə	ní/níri	(ɪ)m̩ɪɪ	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
n̩sɔŋ (tooth)	ná	nén/nínə	ní/níri	m̩sɔŋ	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
n̩bom (egg)	ná	nén/nínə	ní/níri	m̩(m)bo	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
n̩tɪŋ (raphia)	ná	nén/nínə	ní/níri	m̩tɪŋ	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri

n̄k+ŋ (pipe)	ná	nén/nínə	ní/níri	m̄k+ŋ	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
n̄kɔŋ (spear)	ná	nén/nínə	ní/níri	m̄kɔŋ	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
n̄lúʔu (spoon)	ná	nén/nínə	ní/níri	m̄lúʔu	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
n̄jé (grave/tomb)	ná	nén/nínə	ní/níri	m̄jyé	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
n̄kyé (charcoal)	ná	nén/nínə	ní/níri	m̄kyé	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
CI 19 /fɛ-/ CI 6 /mɪ-/							
f̄ikó (bean)	fá	fén/fínə	fí/fíri	m̄kó (beans)	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
f̄ɪŋwán (salt ball)	fá	fén/fínə	fí/fíri	m̄ŋwán	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
f̄sán (broomstick)	fá	fén/fínə	fí/fíri	m̄sán	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri

fɪtam (small seed)	fá	fén/fínə	fí/fíri	m̩nta	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
fɪndíʔi (smoke)	fá	fén/fínə	fí/fíri	m̩ndíʔi	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
fɪfâ (longtail bird)	fá	fén/fínə	fí/fíri	m̩fâ	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
fɪnɪkwáʔnɪ (pebble)	fá	fén/fínə	fí/fíri	m̩nɪkwáʔnɪ	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
fɪtúʔu (potato)	fá	fén/fínə	fí/fíri	m̩tuʔu	má	mén/mínə	mí/míri
CI 7 /a- / CI 8 /ɪ- /							
àtséʔɛ (cloth)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	ɪtséʔɛ (clothes)	tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʧí/ʧíri
àzúʔu (yam)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	ɪdzúʔu	tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʧí/ʧíri
àbare (mad person)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	ɪbare	tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʧí/ʧíri

àkwíʔitɨ (knee)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	ɨkwíʔitɨ		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʧí/ʧíri
àtúʔu (thigh)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	ɨtúʔu		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʧí/ʧíri
àbɨŋ (dance)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	ɨbɨŋ		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʧí/ʧíri
àku (leg)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	(m)ɨku		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʧí/ʧíri
àzúm (thing)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	ɨʒúm		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʧí/ʧíri
àtalɛm (bat)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	ɨtalɛm		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʧí/ʧíri
àtaʔa (snail)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	ɨtaʔa		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʧí/ʧíri
àbɛb(ɨ) (he-goat)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	ɨbɛb(ɨ)		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʧí/ʧíri
àkwɛn (bone) (d)–	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	ɨkwɛn		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʧí/ʧíri
àtam (fruit)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	ɨtam		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʧí/ʧíri

CI 9 /n- /				CI 10 /n- /				
mbyí (goat)	zá	zén	ʒí/ʒíri	mbyí (goats)		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʈí/ʈíri
ngvó (dog)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	ngvó		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʈí/ʈíri
ŋkfù (time)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	ŋkfù		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʈí/ʈíri
mbán (nail)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	mbán		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʈí/ʈíri
(d)–								
mbàʔa (cloud)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	mbàʔa		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʈí/ʈíri
ngúb (fowl)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	ngúb		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʈí/ʈíri
ndá (house)	zá	zén/zínə		ndá		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʈí/ʈíri
			ʒí/ʒíri					
nàm (beast)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	nàm		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʈí/ʈíri
ŋkáb (money)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	ŋkáb		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʈí/ʈíri

ηkàb (cap/hat)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	ηkàb		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʈʂí/ʈʂíri
ηkwén (wood) (d)–	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	ηkwén		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʈʂí/ʈʂíri
ndàb (trap)	zá	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	ndàb		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʈʂí/ʈʂíri
ndžă (soup/broth; vegetable)	za	zén/zínə	ʒí/ʒíri	ndžă		tsá	tsén/tsínə	ʈʂí/ʈʂíri

Some nouns are already in the plural form so fall in classes 6, 8 and 10. Examples are:

57.

Class 6	Class 8	Class 10
m̃luʔə (wine)	ʔfú(ə) (fish)	ndzǎ (soup/both; vegetable),
m̃vúri(-ə) (oil)	ʔfu(ə) (fart)	etc. (all cl 10 nouns)
m̃twé (spittle)		
m̃dzɪ(ə) (food)		
m̃bye (heart)		
m̃tô (stomach/intestine)		

Leroy (2007:109) maintains that class 1b nouns have the prefix /ñ-/ which is represented by ʔ- like in /ʔsúŋǎ/ [súŋǎ] **súŋǎ** (friend) and /ʔnyòŋ(ə)/ [ʔnyòŋ(ə)] **ʔŋɔŋ** (hair). It is also represented by a homorganic nasal in front of other consonants following the rule of assimilation (see 3.7.2.). Examples are: **ndóm(ə)** (male/husband), **mbàb(ə)** (meat/rodents), **ŋkùm(ə)** (noble), **ŋkúm(ə)** (collapse), etc.

As discussed earlier in (5.2.3.) many nouns in Mankon are derived from verbs and some from adjectives by prefixing **à-**, **ì-**, **m(b)-**, **n-**, **ŋ-**, **fɪ-**, **n(d)-**, **ñ-**, **tɪ-**, and **m̃-**. However, the majority of these nouns exist the very way they are (i.e. without being derived). Examples are **àlaŋ(ə)** (chair), **àtséʔɛ** (cloth), **ʔfəŋ(ə)** (anus), **ʔbɔʔɔ** (mushroom), **mbàb(ə)** (rat/rodent/meat), **m̃àfɛ** (sweet potato), **ndàb(ə)** (trap), **ŋkáb(ə)** (money), **fɪkón/fɪkúŋ(ə)** (bean), **ñdɪŋ(ə)** (eye), **m̃luʔu(-ə)** ((palm)wine/beer), **m̃vúri(-ə)** (oil), etc. Many words when pronounced singly

have the floating schwa (–ə) at the end, but when pronounced in the middle of a sentence, the /–ə/ disappears. For example, **mbàbó**, but in a sentence like: **Kò mbab zô** (Take your meat.), we see that the /–ə/ cancels out.

5.3.2. Quantifiers

- a) Numerals: **mòʔ** / **táʔa** (one), **bâ** (two), **tárə** (three), **kwà** (four), **tân** (five), **ntúgə** (six), **sàmbâ** (seven), **n̩f̩** (eight), **n̩bvúʔə** (nine), **n̩ɣúm** (ten), **n̩ɣúm** (**n̩**) **ntsɔb mɔʔ** (eleven), etc. are used to count nouns. E.g:

58.

táʔa abô or **abô (zí a) mɔʔ** (one hand)

mbó (m̩) m̩mbâ (two hands)

mbó m̩ntarə (three hands)

mbó (m̩) n̩kwà (four hands)

mbó m̩ntân (five hands)

mbó (m̩) ntugə (six hands)

mbó (m̩) sambâ (seven hands)

mbó (m̩) n̩f̩ (eight hands)

mbó (m̩) n̩bvúʔə (nine hands)

mbó (m̩) n̩ɣum (ten hands)

mbó (m̩) n̩ɣum (n̩) ntsɔb mɔʔ (eleven hands), etc.

The plural and singular descriptive *functors* (**m̩**) and (**zí a**) above could be left out without impairing intelligibility. Conversely, the prenasalisation of the bilabial and dental

alveo–palatal plosives as in **bâ**, **tárə** and **tân** with [m] and [n] respectively, is due to phonological influences. The nasals were not supposed to be there, but in anticipation to pronounce **bâ**, **tárə** and **tân**, the bilabial and dental alveo–palatal nasals are inserted.

Let us consider these other examples:

Table 16:

Singular	Plural
táʔa azumə àzú mɔʔɔ àzú(m) (zi a) mɔʔɔ } one/a thing	ɣdzúm (tsi) bâ, tárə ɣdzúm (tsi) nɛkwa ɣdzúm (tsi) tân, ntúgə, sàmbá, etc. (two, three, four, etc things)
táʔa kàpfuɲam kàpfuɲam (wi) mɔʔɔ } one / a pig	bɛkɔpfuɲam (bi) biɓâ, tárə bɛkɔpfuɲam (bi) nɛkwa bɛkɔpfuɲam (bi) biɓân, etc.
táʔa fɪtúʔu fɪtúʔu (fi) mɔʔɔ } one / a potato	mɪtúʔu (mi) mɪmbâ mɪtúʔu (mi) mɪntárə mɪtúʔu (mi) nɛkwa mɪtúʔu (mi) mɪntân mɪtúʔu (mi) ntugə, sàmbâ, etc

táʔa n̄ŋgɔm n̄ŋgɔm (ni) mɔʔɔ }	one plantain	m̄ŋgɔm (mi) m̄imbâ, etc as above
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5.3.3. Partitives

Nouns that can be divided into parts have some phrases put before them to determine their quantity. Examples:

59.

I: mbúm (a grain of) – ntɔwì (corn / maize)

– màndzû (groundnut)

– fìkón (bean)

II: àsaʔa (a hand of) n̄ŋgɔm/ambõ (plantains / bananas)

III: ngám (a bunch/cluster of) – n̄ŋgòm

– mbàñé (palm-nuts)

IV: àxámə/ngɔɣɔ/ŋgám (a bunch/cluster of) ntɔwì (corn / maize)

V: n̄bɔŋ n̄/àɔfwirə (a heap of) ŋkwínə/ŋkwén (firewood)

VI: àtam(ə) (a fruit of) – byâ (avocado, pear)

– màngorə (mango)

– làmsɪ (orange)

– àdʒi(ə) (a large citrus fruit. This fruit is used

to play a rolling game from which

the compound ‘àtam(ə)–adʒi(ə)’

(football) emanates.

- VII: **ndzàŋ** (the seed of) – **byâ**
 – **màŋgorə** (mango)
 – **mbîś** (shear nut)
- VIII: **ntfɔ̀wèb** / **àtámə** / **ŋkəm** (a chunk of) **ɲam** (meat)
- IX: **tɔ́ɔ́** / **ndón** / **ntsón** (a container/cup/bottle of – **ŋkyi(ɛ)** (water)
 – **mîvurə (i)** (oil)
- X: **ntúʔu** / **ndón** (a cup / glass / measurement of – **ŋgàré** (garri)
 – **àlési(ə)** (rice)
- XI: **ŋkòm** (a crate/box of) – **mîlúʔu(–ə)** (wine)
 – **àtséʔe** (clothes)
- XII: **àbayə** (a slice of) – **àtî(ə)** (stick, tree)
 – **ndǎŋŋî(–ə)** (bamboo)
 – **nîbɔ́ɔ́** (pumpkin)
 – **àzúʔu(–ə)** (yam)
- XIII: **àkum(ə)** (a piece of) – **àtî(ə)**
 – **ndǎŋŋî(–ə)**

5.3.4. Articles:

In Mankon, when a noun appears singly it has an indefinite meaning. Therefore, whenever we see **àbô**, **ndàbə**, **fî**, etc, we will read ‘a hand, a trap, a king, etc’ respectively. However, the definite meaning is obtained by post-modifying the noun e.g. (also see table 15 at 5.3.1 and below):

60.

fî manko – the *Fo* (of) Mankon (as a geographical entity).

fî wutsé/wutsére – a *Fo* certain (a certain *Fo*).

fî mankuŋə – the *Fo* of the Mankon people.

ndàb zî³ tsê (a certain trap)

mbá wu tsê	a certain man
n̄ŋgɔm nə tsê	a certain plantain
ndàb (plur.) tsə tsê	some/certain traps
ɪdzúm tsə tsê	some/certain things
mbò mə tsê	some/certain eggs
*bēm bə tsê	some/certain people / persons

The last example **bēm** undergoes many curious phonological changes. In other environments, the word is **bē** (people/persons). Nevertheless, in the area where there is a succeeding word, the word becomes **bèn** and if this succeeding word starts with a bilabial, the [n] of **bèn** is **assimilated regressively** and the vowel [e] changes to [ɛ]. We deduce from the above examples that [tsê] means ‘certain’. The ‘functors’: **zè** (sometimes **zĩ**)⁴, **wù**, **nè**, **mè**, **tsè**, and **bè** are used for concord in class. We note here that there is no agreement in gender in Mankon, but an agreement in class as seen above (class 1, 2, 3, etc).

Table 17:

SINGULAR	PLURAL
ndàb zɪ wuə (the trap)	ndàb tsə wuə (the traps)
abó zə wuə (the hand)	mbó mə wuə (the hands)
màngyé wu wə (the woman)	bàngyé bə wuə (the women)
fítúʔu fə wuə (the potato)	mĩtúʔu mə wuə (the potatoes)

n̄l̄aŋ nə wuə (the pineapple)	m̄l̄aŋ mə wuə (the pineapples)
Tsí wu wə (the Tsi)	b̄l̄ Tsí bə wuə (the Tsis)
àzúʔu zə wuə (the yam)	ʔdzúʔu tsə wuə (the yams)

5.3.5. Tsum(ə) – (Every / All / The whole)

Examples:

61.

n̄àm tsumə	all animals / every animal
ŋgʋ́vó tsùmə	all dogs / every dog
b̄əm b̄i tsumə	all people / everybody
àláʔa tsumə	The whole village / country
ŋkàŋ tsumə	all the peers, all the / every youth
mbyí tsumə	the whole world

5.3.6. M̄iŋâ – (small, a little)

EXAMPLES:

62.

m̄iŋa m̄i ŋkabə	a little money
m̄iŋa m̄i anuə	a small/a little/an insignificant thing

5.3.7. Wù/Mə/Bə ɣáʔnə – (much, a lot, plenty of, many)

Examples:

63.

m̄iŋwó mə ɣaʔnə	many deaths
m̄iŋu mə ɣáʔnə	many things
b̄əm bə ɣáʔnə	many people

ŋkyí wu ŋgaʔnə⁵ much/a lot of/plenty of water.

5.3.8. Kúʔnə / kúʔə – (enough)

Examples:

64.

Ŋkááb za ɪ kuʔə / kuʔnə

{*Money the it (is) enough.} → The money is enough.

ʔ mǝ mɪdzɪ kuʔə

*It mine food (is) enough.

Mɪdzɪ man mɪ kuʔə⁶

*Food mine it (is) enough.

} My food is enough.

} I am full.

(In rapid rendition, the /n/ of **mán** assimilates progressively to the /m/ of **mɪ**. But when **mán** precedes **mɪdzɪ**, the vowel of **mán** is instead nasalised (**mǝ**).

5.3.9. Kǝ / Kǝ kǝ – (No / Nothing)

Examples:

65.

Kǝ mɪvurɪ, kǝ ɲam a ɲe/mu mɪdzɪ ma.

(*No oil, no meat in/inside food the)

→ There is neither oil nor meat in the food.

Ó ɣen dʒe ake → Kǝ kǝ

(*You went saw it what? → Nothing)

→ What did you see when there? → Nothing.

5.4. Noun classes and pronouns

The following noun classes go with these pronouns:

Table 18:

Noun class(es)	Pronouns	Example
1a, 1b, 7	á	/sɪŋ ɪ mé ´ / → sɪŋ wa me (Where is the bird?) Á me (Where is it?)
3a, 3b, 9, 8,10	ĩ ĩ	/n-dàb ɫ mé ` / → ndàbĩ zá mē (Where is the trap?) ĩ mē (Where is it?) /ĩ-dzúʔu ɪ mé ´ / → ĩdzúʔu tsa me (where are the yams?) ĩ me (Where are they?)
5	nĩ	/nĩ-bóʔɔ (nĩ) mé ´ / → nĩbóʔɔ na me (Where is the pumpkin?) nĩ me (Where is it?)
19	fĩ	/fĩ-kón (fĩ) mé ´ / → fĩkó fa me (Where is the bean?) fĩ me (Where is it?)
2	bĩ	/bĩ-lóm (bĩ) mé ´ / → bĩlóm ba me (Where are the husbands?) bĩ me (Where are they?)
6	mĩ	/mĩ-jóm (mĩ) mé ´ / → mĩjó ma me (Where are the farms. mĩ me (Where are they?)

5.5. Pronouns

Table 19:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	N°
Subject Nominative	Object (direct) Accusative	Object (indirect) Dative	Possessive (singular) Genitive	Possessive (plural) Genitive	Reflexive	Relative	
Ma (I)	γάν (me)	mê (me)	zế/zán, nế/nán, γề/γàn, fế/fán. (my, mine)	tsố, /tsán, mê/mán bế/bán (my, mine)	mê mê (myself)	mê wá(m) bá?a (the one who) (the one that)	1
O (You sing.)	γό/wó (you)	γô/wô	zó, fó, wó, nó (your, yours)	tsó, mó, bó (your, yours)	γó γ; ôwó wô (yourself)	wô wá(m) bá?a (the one who) (the one that)	2
Nή (You plur.)	wή(ə) (you)	bή(ə) (you)	zήη, fήη, wήή, nήη. (your, yours)	tsén/tsήη, mén/mήη, bán/bήη (your, yours)	bή bήη (yourselves)	bήη wá(m) bá?a (the ones who) (the ones that)	3

Tɪ (We)	=2	Wɔ̃ɣə (us)	bɔ̃ɣə/ bɔ̃ɣé (to us)	zɔ̃ɣə/zɔ̃ɣé wɔ̃ɣə/wɔ̃ɣé fɔ̃ɣə/fɔ̃ɣé nɔ̃ɣə/nɔ̃ɣé (our, ours)	tsɔ̃ɣə / tsɔ̃ɣé mɔ̃ɣə / mɔ̃ɣé bɔ̃ɣə / bɔ̃ɣé (our, ours)	bɔ̃ɣə bɔ̃ɣə (ourselves)	bɔ̃ɣə wá(m) báʔa (the ones who) (the ones that)	4
	Bɪɣɪ/ Bɪɣnə	wɪɣɪ/ wɪɣinə (us)	bɪɣɪ/ bɪɣnə (to us)	zɪɣɪ/zɪɣnə wɪɣə/wɪɣnə fɪɣɪ/fɪɣnə nɪɣɪ/nɪɣnə (our, ours)	tsɪɣɪ/ tsɪɣnə mɪɣə/mɪɣnə bɪɣə/ bɪɣnə (our, ours)	bɪɣnə bɪɣnə (ourselves)	bɪɣə wá(m) báʔa bɪɣnə wá(m) báʔa (the ones who) (the ones that)	5
A + WÉɛɛ	He She	wÉɛɛ/yí (him, her)	WÉɛɛ/zɪ, wa(m)bô (to him/her)	ʒí/ʒé, fí/fíé yí/yé, ní/níé (his; her, hers)	ɥí/ɥé, mí/míé, bí/byé (his; her, hers)	zɪ zɪ(ə) (himself, herself)	zɪ wá(m) báʔa wÉɛɛ wá(m) báʔa (the one who) (the one that)	6
	A, Fɪ ɪ, Mɪ (It) Nɪ,	ZÉɛɛ wÉɛɛ (it)	wÉɛɛ wa(m)bô (to it)	ʒí/ʒé, fí/fíé yí/yé, ní/níé (its)	ɥí /ɥé, mí/ mié bí /byé (its)	zɪ zɪ(ə) (itself)	zÉɛɛ za(m) báʔa (the one that)	7

Bô (They) Bɿ	wá bɛ̃ɛ tsɛ̃ɛ mé̃ɛ	bô (to them)	zá, fá, wá, ná (their, theirs)	tsá, má, bá (their, theirs)	bô bó (themselves)	bô bá(m) báʔa (the ones who) tsɛ̃ɛ tsa(m) báʔa (the ones that)	8
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Some examples in sentences

5.5.1. Nominative

66.

i) **Má dziə (ye).**

(*I eating.) → I am eating.

ii) **Ó dziə (ye).**

(*You eating.) → You are eating.

iii) **Ní dziə (ye).**

{*You (plur.) eating.} → You are eating.

iv) **Tí dziə (ye).**

(*We=2 eating.) → We are eating.

v) **Bíxi / Bixnə dziə (ye).**

(*We>2 eating. → We are eating.

vi) **Á / Wéɛ dziə (ye).**

(*He / She eating.) → He / She is eating.

vii) **ɪ dziə (ye).**

(*It eating is.) → It is eating.

viii) **Bó / Bɪ | dziə | (ye).**

(*They | eating.) | → They are eating.

- It should be noted that the optional (yé) has only a syntactic function (value) as it appears exclusively at the end of constructs.

The neuter nominative pronoun 'it' varies according to the first syllable of the noun it refers to:

⇒ Nouns that begin with **ɪ-** or diagraphs and clusters like **mb-**, **nd-**, **ŋg-**, **ny-**, **mbv-**, **mbv-**, **ntfw-**, **ŋky-**, etc.⁷ E.g:

67.

(i) **Mbáŋni** | **za** | **(i)** | **karɪ.**

{*Man | the | he | (is) very stingy.} → The man is very stingy.

Under normal circumstances /**kàrɪ**/ is ‘stingy’ or ‘be stingy’. Therefore, the word is both an adjective and a verb (intransitive). However, when the second syllable is pronounced with a high or an elevated tone, the word takes the intensifier ‘very’⁸.

(ii) **ɪ** (**mbáŋni**) | **mê.**

(*He | where?) → Where is he? (**mbáŋni**).

(iii) **Nàm** | **zá** | **(i)** | **faŋ.**

{*Animal | the | it | (is) very big.} → The animal is very big.

(iv) **ɪ** (**nam**) | **me.**

(*It | where. → Where is it?

⇒ Nouns that begin with **fɪ**– take **Fɪ** as nominative pronoun e.g.

68.

(i) **Fɪkó** | **fa** | **fɪ** | **bomə.**

{*Bean | the | it (is) weeviled.} → The bean is weeviled.

(ii) **Fɪ** | **bom.**

(* It | weeviled.) → Is it weeviled?

⇒ Nouns that begin with **a**– (class 7) and class 1b nouns take the pronoun **Á**. e.g.

69.

- (i) **Azú?u** | **za** | **bye.** |
 { *Yam | the | (is) rotten. } | → The yam is rotten.
- (ii) **Á** | **bye.** |
 (*It | rotten?) | → Is it rotten?
- (iii) **Ndóm** | **a** | **mê** |
 (* Husband/Male | he | where?) | → Where is the husband/male?
- (iv) **Á** | **mê** |
 (*He/It | where?) | → Where is he/it?
- ⇒ Nouns that begin with **nĩ** – take the pronoun **Nĩ**. e.g.

70.

- (i) **Nĩbi** | **ná** | **(nĩ)** | **bɔŋ** | **ba** |
 { *Kola nut | the | it | (is) tasty | very. } | → The kola nut is very tasty.
- (ii) **Nĩ** | **bɔŋ** |
 (*It | very tasty?) | → Is it very tasty?
- (iii) **È** | **nĩ** | **bɔŋə⁹** |
 (Yes | it | very tasty) | → Yes, it is very tasty.
- ⇒ Nouns that begin with **mĩ** – take the pronoun **mĩ**. eg:

71.

- (i) **Mĩlu?u** | **má** | **(mĩ)** | **tsɛɣə.** |
 { *Palm–wine | the | it | (is) stale. } | → The palm–wine is stale.
- (ii) **Mĩ** | **tsɛɣĩ.** |
 (*It | stale?) | → Is it stale?

5.5.2. Accusative

72.

- i) Ó tamə/tamtə yan.
 (*You | deceive | me. → You are deceiving me.
- ii) Má tamə/tamtə yo/wo. |
 (*I | deceive you.) → I am deceiving you (sing.).
- iii) Má tamə/tamtə winə.
 (*Iyou.) → I you (plural).
- iv) Á tamə/tamtə wəyə/wəye.
 (*He/she deceiving us. → He/She is deceiving us (= 2).
- v) Á tamə/tamtə winə/winə.
 (*He/She.....us.) → He/She.....us (>2).
- vi) Bɛɛɛ tamə/tamtə wɛɛɛ/yɛ.
 (*We deceive him/her.) → We are deceiving him/her.

Tone plays a very important grammatical function in Mankon (cf 3.11.5. and 5.8.). For example in (i-vi) above, because the tone of the nominal pronoun and that of the verb are high, the tense is the present or the present continuous. However, when the rendition of the nominal pronoun is low and the first syllable of the verb is high, the tense is the simple past or the past perfect.

Example:

73.

- i) À | támə/támte | winə/winə. |
 {He/She (has) deceived | us.}

ii) À | kǒ | ɲgvo | za. → À | kǒ | zɛɛɛ.
 {* He/She | (has) caught | dog | the.} {He/She | (has) caught} it.
 → He/she (has) caught the dog.

iii) À | kǒ | kàpfɔnam | wá. → À | kǒ | wɛɛɛ.
 {*He/She | (has) caught | pig | the.} He/She | (has) caught | it.
 → He has caught the pig.

iv) Tsé | wa | tam/tamtɪ | bɛm | ba. → À | támtə/támtə | - wâ
 - bɛɛɛ.
 {Tse(name) | the | (has) deceived | people | the.} He | (has) deceived them.
 → Tse (has) deceived the people

v) Tsé (a) | kǒ | ɲgub | tsa. → Á | kǒ | tsɛɛɛ
 {*Tse (he) | (has) caught | fowls | the.} He | (has) caught | them.
 → Tse (has) caught the fowls.

vi) Tse (á) | kɸuru | mɪɲgɔ | ma. → Á | kɸurə | mɛɛɛ.
 {*Tse (he) | (has eaten) ate | plantains | the} He | (has eaten) ate | them.
 → Tse (has eaten) ate the plantains.

5.5.3. Dative

74.

a. i) Yá | (a) | mbo | mɛ (yê).
 → Give (to) hands me. → Give it/them to me.

ii) Mà | yá | (a) | mbo | yô/wô.
 (*I | give | (to) | hands | you?)
 → Should I give it/them to you?

iii) À | yá | (a) | mbo | bɪɲə.
 → He/she | (has given) gave (to) | (hands) | you.
 He/She (has given) gave it/them to you.

iv) Bɪ/Bó | ya | (a) | mbo | bɔɣə/bɔɣé.
 → They | (have given) gave (to) hands | us = 2.)

v) **Bí/Bó** | **ya** | (a) | **mbo** | **bìyè/bìyè.**
 → They (have given) gave (to) hands us > 2.

vi) **Yá** | **midzi** | - **wa¹⁰** | (m)**bô.**
 → Give food him/her to hands

vii) | - a **mbo** | **wɛɛ / zî.**
 → Give food (to) hand him/her.

viii) **Yá** | **nam** | a (m)**bo** | **bô.**

b. i) **À** | **nî** | **me** | **wa (m) baʔa** | **o** | **lon** | **e¹¹.**
 (* It is me that you are looking for.)
 → I'm the one you are looking for.

ii) **À** | **nî** | **yò/wò** | **wá (m)baʔa** | **ma** | **lon** | **e.**
 {*It is you (sing.) that I am looking for.}
 → You are the one I am looking for.

iii) **À** | **nî** | **bîŋ** | **wa (m)baʔa** | **ma** | **lon** | **e.**
 {*It is you (plur.) that I am looking for.}
 → You are the ones I am looking for.

iv) **À** | **nî** | **bɔyè** | **wa(m) baʔa** | **bî** | **lon** | **e.**
 {*It is us (=2) that they are looking for.}
 → We are the ones they are looking for.

v) **À** | **nî** | **bìyî/bìyè** | **wa(m)baʔa** | **bî** | **lon** | **e.**
 {*It..... us (>2)for.}
 → Weones.....for.)

vi) **À** | **nî** | **zî/wɛɛ** | **wa(m) baʔa** | **ma** | **lon** | **e.**
 (*It is him /her that I am looking for.
 → I am looking for him /her.

vii) **À** | **nî** | **zɛɛ** | **za(m) baʔa** | **ma** | **lon** | **e.**
 (*It is it that I am looking for.

→ I am looking for it.

- viii) A nɪ bô wá(m) báʔa ma lɔn é.
 (*It.....they.....for.)
 → I am looking for them.

5.5.4. Reflexive

75.

- i) Mâ | fáʔa | àfaʔa | zá | me mē (yé).
 (I | worked | work | the | myself |
 → I did the work myself.

- ii) Ò | fáʔa | àfaʔa | zá | xo xô /wo wô (yé).
 → You.....yourself.

- iii) Nɪ | fáʔa | àfaʔa | zá | bɪŋ bɪŋə.
 → You.....yourselves.

- iv) Tɪ | fáʔa | àfaʔa | zá | bɔɣə bɔɣə (yé).
 → We = 2.....ourselves.

- v) Bɪɣɪ/Bɪɣnə | fáʔa | àfaʔa | zá | bɪɣnə/bɪɣnə (yé).
 → We > 2.....ourselves.

- vi) Á/ɪ/Wére | faʔa | àfaʔa | zá | zɪ zɪ
 → He/She/It.....himself/herself/itself.

- vii) ʔ (e.g.the dog) | kɔ | nàm | zá | zɪ zɪ |
 (*The dog | caught | animal | the | itself.) |
 → The dog caught the animal by itself.

- viii) Bó | faʔa | àfaʔa | zá | bo bô (yé). |
 (*They | worked | work | the | themselves.) |
 → They did the work themselves.

5.6. Noun agreement with adjectives

Mankon adjectives are derived from verbs. There are a few attributive adjectives. e.g.

76.

- i. **lvuŋ(ə)** (grow old) → **ndvùŋ**¹² **nɪmó** (an old/aged woman)
- ii. **kwàré** (flirt) → **àkwarə mɔŋgyé** (a prostitute)
- iii. **bóŋ(ə)** (be nice) → **mbòŋ mɔŋgyé** (a beautiful woman)
- iv. **fáŋ(ə)** (grow fat) → **àfáŋ-atû** (fat head); **ndzám-atû** (axe-headed).

However, the majority of adjectives are predicative¹³ with the following suffixes added to the verb form: **-ə**, **-nə**/**-ni**. Whatever the case, the predicative form of the adjective must agree with these adjectival forms: **wù/wá** → classes 1a, 1b, and 3; **bə** → class 2; **nə** → class 5; **mə** → class 6; **fá** → class 19; **zə** → class 7; **tsə** → classes 8 and 10; **zɪn** → class 9.

Table 20:

Class	Adjectival form	Verb form	Predicative use of an adjective
1a	Wù/wá	fáŋ(ə) (grow fat/big)	búʔu wù faŋnə (A fat/big chimp). Also, búʔu wa faŋə (The chimp is fat/big).
1b	wù/wá	báŋ(ə) (be	ŋóŋə wù (m) baŋnə (A fair-

		fair–skinned)	skinned mother–in–law). ᵑᵑᵑᵑ wa baᵑᵑ (The mother–in–law is fair–skinned).
3	wù/wá	fém(ə) (be clean)	ᵑᵑí wù fémᵑᵑ (A clean face). ᵑᵑí wa fémᵑᵑ (The face is clean).
2	bə/bá	fáj(ə)	bᵑbúᵑu bə faᵑᵑ (Fat/Big chimps). bᵑbúᵑu ba faᵑᵑ (The chimps are fat/big).
5	nə/ná	ᵑúᵑu (smell bad)	nᵑbóm nə ᵑuᵑᵑᵑᵑ (A smelly egg). nᵑbóm ná ᵑuᵑᵑ (The egg is smelly).
6	mə/má	ᵑúᵑu	mᵑ(m)bo mə ᵑuᵑᵑᵑᵑ (Smelly eggs). mᵑ(m)bo má ᵑuᵑᵑᵑᵑ (The eggs are smelly).
19	fə/fá	bóm(ə) (be weeviled)	fᵑkó fə bomᵑᵑ (Bean seed eaten by weevils). fᵑkó fà bomᵑᵑ (the bean seed is weeviled).
7	zə/zá	lóm(ə) (be sweet)	àzúᵑu zə ləᵑᵑᵑᵑ (Sweet yam). àzúᵑu za ləᵑᵑᵑᵑ (The yam is sweet).
8	tsə/tsá	lóm	ᵑdzúᵑu tsə ləᵑᵑᵑᵑ (Sweet yams). ᵑdzúᵑu tsa ləᵑᵑᵑᵑ (The yams are sweet).

10	tsə/tsá	fɪŋ (be dark/black)	ngvó tsə fɪŋnə (Black dogs). ngvó tsa fɪŋnə (The dogs are black).
9	zɪ/zá	fɪŋ	ngvó zɪ fɪŋnə (A black dog). ngvó za fɪŋnə (The dog is black).

5.7. Associative or genitive constructions

Associative or genitive constructions refer to the structure $N_1 + AM + N_2$ (Leroy 1977: 131) or N_1 of N_2 (Tanda et al 2009) where AM = associative marker. N_2 could be represented by a pronoun. The AM may be marked as in classes 2 (bɪ), 5 (nɪ), 6 (mɪ) and 19 (fɪ) or exists as a ɪ in classes 1 (ɪ), 3 (ɪ), 7 (à), 8 (ɪ), 9 (ɪ) and 10 (ɪ). However, it must be marked in the interrogative construction. Let us consider the following data:

Table 21:

Class	AM	Examples
7	à	àzúʔu ɪ zô (your yam) → à zó ¹⁴ mē (Where is yours?) àzúʔu ɪ furu (<i>Fru's</i> yam)
1a	ɪ	ànto ɪ ʔo (your pot) → ɪ ʔo mé (Where is yours?) ànto ɪ fúru (<i>Fru's</i> pot)
1b	ɪ	món ɪ ʔo (your child) → ɪ ʔo mé (Where is yours?) món ɪ furu (<i>Fru's</i> child)
2	bɪ	bɪbúʔu ɪ bô (your chimps) → ɪ bó mē (Where are

		yours?) bǝbúʔu bi furu (<i>Fru's</i> chimp)
3a	ɛ̃	ɛ̃kə ɛ̃ ɣó (your swearing) → ɛ̃ ɣó mē (-where is yours?) ɛ̃kə ɛ̃ fúru (<i>Fru's</i> swearing)
3b	ɛ̃	ɛ̃gáɾɪ ɛ̃ ɣo (your gun) → ɛ̃ ɣó mē (Where is yours?) ɛ̃gáɾɪ ɛ̃ furu (<i>Fru's</i> gun)
5	nɛ̃	nǝbóm ɛ̃ no (your egg) → ɛ̃ nó mē (Where is yours?) nǝbóm nɛ̃ furu (<i>Fru's</i> egg)
6	mɛ̃	mǝkúnɛ̃ ɛ̃ mo (your beans) → ɛ̃ mó mē (where is yours?) mǝkúnɛ̃ mɛ̃ furu (<i>Fru's</i> beans)
19	fɛ̃	fǝɛ̃gwán ɛ̃ fo (your salt) → ɛ̃ fó mē (Where is yours?) fǝɛ̃gwán fɛ̃ furu (<i>Fru's</i> salt)
8	ɛ̃	ɛ̃dzúm ɛ̃ tso (your things) → ɛ̃ tsó mē (where are yours?) ɛ̃dzúm furu (<i>Fru's</i> things)
9	ɛ̃	mbyí ¹⁵ ɛ̃ zò (your goat) → ɛ̃ zo mé (where is yours?) mbyí ɛ̃ furu (<i>Fru's</i> goat)
10	ɛ̃	mbyí ɛ̃ tso (your goats) → ɛ̃ tsó mē (Where are yours?) mbí ɛ̃ furu (<i>Fru's</i> goats)

A closer look at the behaviour of classes 9 and 10 nouns leaves us with the conclusion that in **Mankon**, **grammatical tone does not only mark tenses, but also**

mark class. The AM for class 9 nouns (i.e. the singular forms) is low-toned while that in class 10 (the plural counterparts) bears a high tone.

Other associative markers

5.7.1. Singular

77.

- i. àbə zə/zán (my/mine)
(bag my/mine)
→ my bag/it is mine
mɪ̀vúɾɪ mə/man¹⁶
(oil my/mine)
→ my oil/it is mine
ŋgwé ɣə/ɣàn
(wife my/mine)
→ my wife/she is mine
nɪ̀bí nə/nan
kola nut my/mine
→ my kola nut/it is mine)
fɪ̀sáj fə/fan
(brooms my/mine)
→ my brooms/they are mine
- ii. àbə zó (your/yours; *sing.*)
(bag your/yours)
→ your bag/it is yours
mɪ̀vúɾɪ mo
ŋgwé wò

nǝbí no
fǝsán fo

iii. àbǝ zǝñǝ (your/yours; *plur.*)
(bag your/your)

→ your bag/it is yours

mǝvúɾi mǝñǝ
ŋgwé wǝñǝ
nǝbí nǝñǝ
fǝsán fǝñǝ

iv. àbǝ zǝχǝ/zǝχǝ (our/ours = 2)
(bag our/ours)

→ our bag/it is ours

mǝvúɾi mǝχǝ/mǝχǝ
ŋgwé wǝχǝ/wǝχǝ
nǝbí nǝχǝ/nǝχǝ
fǝsán fǝχǝ/fǝχǝ

v. àbǝ zǝχɿ/zǝχɿnǝ (our/ours > 2.)
(bag our/ours)

→ our bag:it is ours

mǝvúɾi mǝχǝ/mǝχǝ
ŋgwé wǝχɿ/wǝχɿnǝ
nǝbí nǝχǝ/nǝχɿnǝ
fǝsán fǝχǝ/fǝχɿnǝ

vi. àbǝ zɿ/zɿ (his/her/hers)

(bag his/her/hers)

→ his/her bag/it is his/hers

m̃vúɾɿ mi/miɛ

ɲgwé yi/yɛ

ñbí ni/niɛ

fɪsán fi/fiɛ

vii. àkwé zi/zɛ (its)

(bone its)

→ Its bone

m̃vúɾɿ mi/miɛ

ɲgwé yi/yɛ

ñdɪ́ghɪ ni/niɛ

(eye.....)

fɪtúʔu fi/fiɛ

(potato.....)

viii. àkaŋə zâ (their/theirs)

(pan their/theirs)

→ their pan/it is theirs

m̃vúɾɿ mâ

ɲgwé wâ

ñbɔʔə nâ

(pumpkin.....)

fɪsán fâ

5.7.2. Plural

i. ʔbə tsé/tsán (my/mine)

(bags my/mine)

→ my bags / they are mine.

mǝvúɾɪ **mǝ/ man**

(oil my/mine)

→ my oil / it is mine

bàŋgyé **bǝ/ ban**

(women my/mine)

→ my women/they are mine

mǝsán **mǝ/ man**

brooms my/mine

→ my brooms/they are mine

ii. **ɿbǝ** **tsó** (your/yours; *sing.*)

(bags your/yours)

→ your bags/they are yours

mǝvúɾɪ **mo**

bàŋgyé **bo**

iii. **ɿbǝ** **tsán/ tsɿŋǝ** (your/yours; *plur.*)

Bags your/yours

→ your bags/they are yours

mǝvúɾɪ **mən/ mɿŋǝ**

bàŋgyé **bən/ bɿŋǝ**

iv. **ɿbǝ** **tsóχǝ/ tsóχǝ** (our/ours = 2)

bags our/ours

→ our bags/they are ours

mǝvúɾɪ **móχǝ/ móχǝ**

bàŋgyé **bóχǝ/ bóχǝ**

v. **ɪbə** **tsɪɣə/tsɪɣnə** (our/ours > 2)

Bags our/ours

our bags/they are ours

mɪvúɾɪ **mɪɣə/mɪɣnə**

bàŋgyé **bɪɣə/bɪɣnə**

vi&vii. **ɪfú** **tʃi / tʃɛ**

(fish his/her/hers/ its)

→ his/her/its fish

mɪvúɾɪ **mi / miɛ**

bàŋgyé **bi / byɛ**

viii. **ɪbə** **tsá** (their/theirs)

(bags their/theirs)

→ their bags/they are theirs

ɪfú **tsa**

mɪvúɾɪ **ma**

bàŋgyé **ba**

5.8. Verbs

We can identify six (06) tenses in Mankon:

78.

(a) The present continuous e.g.

Má	ɣɛ	(á)	mutə.
→ I	am going	to	the market.

- The preposition (a) can be omitted without obscuring meaning.

(b) The simple past e.g.

(i) **Mà ɣɛ̃ (a) mutan ɲkwɛn nɪ ɲkabè.**

(ii) **Mà kɪ̃ (tʃi) ɣɛ̃ (a) mutan ɲkwɛn nɪ ɲkabè.**

→ I went to the market and brought back money.

One very curious phenomenon in Mankon and in tonal languages is that tone determines tense. In (a) above, “**ɣɛ̃**” is “am going”, but when the word is marked high “**ɣɛ̃̃**” it means “went”. Apart from the use of the high tone, another past tense marker is “**kɪ̃ (tʃi)**” as in (b) ii above.

(c) The past continuous e.g.

(i) **N̄ĩmó Kə ɣɛ̃ àfon mbómə ɣɛ̃.**

(ii) **N̄ĩmó Kɪ̃ tʃɛ ɲgɛ̃ àfon mbómə ɣɛ̃.**

→ Mother was going to the farm when she met him/her.

(d) The distant past e.g.

(i) **Mà ɣénə awom ɲko tʃwɪə.**

(ii) **Mà tʃí nə ɲgɛ̃ awom ɲko tʃwɪə.**

(iii) **Mà kɪ̃ nə ɲgɛ̃ awom ɲko tʃwɪə.**

→ I once went hunting and caught a hare.

(e) The future tense is realised by placing either “**mɪ̃**” or “**lɔ̃**” before a verb (but we must note that this marker surfaces with an elevated HT) e.g.

(i) **Mà mɪ̃ ɣɛ̃** (I will go....)

(ii) **Ò mɪ̃ ɣɛ̃** (You will go)

(iii) **Á lo ɣɛ zɔ.** (He/She will go tomorrow.)

(f) There are traces of the simple present tense but these are not very evident in longer sentence constructions safe in very short statements like:

Mà ɣa (I give....)

Ò ɣa.....(You give....)

Etc.

(g) The present perfect e.g.

(i) **À ɣɛ nə (ɣé).** (He/She has gone.)

(ii) **ʔ tsá nə ɣé.** [It or He (in the case of 'mbáɲɲi') has passed.]

(iii) **À ɲám ɲɛ (tɛʔɛ) nâ nâ (ɣé).** (He/She has just gone.)

(iv) **ʔ ɲám ɲɛ (tɛʔɛ) nâ nâ (ɣé).** [It or he (mbáɲɲi) has just gone.]

(h) Verb valence

Valency or valence is related to transitivity or intransitivity but not the same. With transitivity and intransitivity, we are looking at the relationship between the verb as having an object or not. With *valency*, we are looking at the relationships or arguments between the verb and other grammatical variables: (i) the subject/nominative in terms of an agent or *actant* in a

syntactic unit. (ii) the direct object/accusative in terms of a grammatical sufferer of an action initiated by an agent through the medium of a verb and (iii) a passive or indirect object/dative which does not suffer directly the action of the verb. Mankon verbs are either *monovalent* i.e. with only one argument related to the subject e.g. (1). **Tàta (a) pfó** (Grandfather/The old man has died) or *divalent* i.e. with two arguments e.g. (2). **Tsè (a) lubé Swiri** (Tse has slapped Swiri). The suffix is crucial in Mankon *valency* grammar. For example, the **-ə** in (2) above makes the verb *divalent* from its **lúb** root.

Kfúrə (chew) vs. **kfúti** (chew in little bits)

Here, the two verbs are different in terms of spelling and meaning. Therefore, we cannot say **-ə** or **-ti** are suffixes.

-tə (a *monovalent* verb suffix)

• **Tsè wě Furu** (Tse is mocking at Furu. = *divalent*) → **Tsè weté** (Tse has smiled/is happy; *monovalent*).

-ə/-sə, -sɪ, -nɪ (*divalent* verb suffixes)

- Àde fúmá/fumsá Tsè (Ade has deceived Tse). Verb root = fúm
- Adè wuʔá/wuʔsá ɸ (Ade has honoured the King). Verb root = wúʔ
- Adè wuʔá/wuʔsɪ nɪdórɪ na (Ade has honoured the merry-making).

-nə, -kə/-kɪ (*monovalent* verb suffixes)

- Nɪbɔʔɔ ná sanə (The pumpkin split).
- Nɪbɔʔɔ ná / mɪbɔʔɔ má sɛŋkə (the pumpkin / pumpkins split into pieces).
- Àde ɸrɪ mbyɪ za (Ade has skinned the goat. = *divalent*)
→ Mbyí za ɸrɪkɪ (Have hairs come off the goat? = *monovalent*). Mbyí za ɸrɪkə (Hairs have come off on parts of the goat. = *monovalent*).
- Àza sarə àtseʔɛ ʒɛ (Aza has torn her dress. = *divalent*).
→ Àtseʔɛ zá sarɪkɪ (Is the dress torn? = *monovalent*).
Àtseʔɛ zá sarɪkə {The dress is torn (to pieces) = *monovalent*}.

If we could draw the conclusion that **-sə** and **-sɪ** are divalent verb suffixes and **-nə**, **-kə/-kɪ** are *monovalent*, it would not be easy to do so either way with **-nɪ/-nə**. These examples will prove us wrong if we did so.

- **Tsè wá sanɪ/sə nɪbɔɔ ná** (Tse has split the pumpkin = *divalent*). Verb root = **sɔ** or **sán**
- **Tsè kɛ ŋkyi wá** (Tse has filtered/sieved the water. = *divalent*) → **ŋkyì wá kɛnɪ** (Has the water become clean? = *monovalent*), but we say **ŋkyì wá kɛnə** (The water has become clean/clear = *monovalent*).

The examples above clearly prove that we use the monovalent suffix **-kɪ** or **-nɪ** for interrogative constructions and the monovalent suffix **-kə** or **-nə** for declaratives. Furthermore, we can now conclude that the prefix in Mankon is an affair of nouns whereas the suffix is that of verbs and adjectives.

5.9. Adverbs

79.

- (a) **ʃɪʔnə** → (well): **Kwéʔə mon wa ʃɪʔnə.**
(Carry the baby well.)
- (b) **Abɔɔbɔ** → (gently): **Á (n)ɛmə abɔɔbɔ!** (Walk gently!)

- (c) **Alèb alèbə** → (gently)
- (d) **Lèlè** → (slowly): **Ó ɣɪ ɪnu tso lèlè**. (You are slow in doing things.)
- (e) **Lè** → (smoothly): **Nó kɔŋ lè**. (The snake moved smoothly.)
- (f) **Gírígiri(-ə)** → (hurriedly): **Wére ɣɪ ɪnu tʃi gírígirə**. (He/ She hurriedly does things.)
- (g) **Kíríkiri(-ə)** → (hurriedly): **Wére ɣɪ ɪnu tʃi kírígirə**. (He/ She hurriedly does things.)
- (h) **Kíkán(ə)** → (badly): **Má nɔŋ kíkənə**. (I slept badly.)
- We immediately notice that all of the above adverbs are onomatopoeic.

5.10. Preposition

The monosyllabic *functor* and the shortest word in Mankon (**a**), is used to indicate prepositions like ‘to’, ‘from’, ‘in’, etc. In many cases this *functor* may not be marked depending on the environment. When it is not marked, the tone must be there.

80.

⇒ Má	ɣè	(á) ¹⁷	àŋwaʔanə .
(I	am going	to	school)
⇒ Má	kwè	(á)	àŋwaʔanə .
(I	am coming back	from	school.)
⇒ À yíri (a) tɪŋ-ŋkunə . (That is it under the bed.)			

⇒ **Swíri (a)¹⁸ tʃɛ (a) mbɛɾɛ ʃomə.**

(Swiri is in the farm.)

⇒ **Tári wɪɣə/wɪɣnə (a) ʃɔmabvúra.**

(Our father who art in heaven.)

In some instances this *functor* combines with other words to give locative prepositions e.g: **á mu(ə)** (inside), **á ʃəŋ(ə)** / **á ʃuri(ə)** (under), **á ndzùm(ə)** (behind), **á atu(ə)**, **á byè** (by the side of / beside). Etc.

5.11. Negation

The following are used to negate: (...) **ká...**, ...**à sé...**, ...**bì sé...**, ...**ĩ sé...**, ...**fɪ sé...**, ...**nɪ sé...**, (...) **tɪ...**, (...) **kɪʔɪ / kúʔu (ə)**...The variation between **a sé** and **ĩ sé** will depend on the type of noun that comes before (cf 7.3.).

81.

a)

Ká	mba	wa	(a)	yɪŋə	yɛ.
(*Not	man	the	him	came	him.)

→The man did not come.

b) **Màngyé wa (a) se dʒwíə.**
(*Woman the she not given birth.)

→The woman has not given birth.

c) **Ngvó za (ɪ) se dzɪə.**
(*Dog the it not eaten.)

→The dog has not eaten.

d) **Tɪ-kúm(ə)** (without a name)

e) **Kɪʔɪ/Kúʔu yɛ!** (Do not go!)

5.12. Only

82.

- **fíkó fa fere-fere** (the bean only)
- **n̄ngom ná ner-e-ner-e** (the plantain only)
- **m̄túʔu ma me-re-me-re** (the potato only)
- **àzúʔu za ze-re-ze-re** (the yam only)
- **màndzú wa were-were** (the groundnuts only)
- **ʔdzúʔu tsa tsere-tsere** (the yams only)
- **bangyé ba be-re-be-re** (the women only)
- **téʔə** also means ‘only’, but it is placed before the noun in question as opposed to the underlined above which come after the noun.

83. **Yá t̄eʔe azúʔu za (a) mbo m̄e (yé).**

(*Give only yam the to (hands) me.)

→ Give only the yam to me.

- Whenever the word ‘yá’ (give) is employed, we must have the nouns ‘abô’ (hand) or ‘mbô’ (hands). This is because the Mankon culture expects that when someone or something is given to somebody, they must take them with their hands. This is a marked difference between Mankon and English, where the English know implicitly that one must take what is given one with one’s hand(s), so it is unnecessary to mention the word(s) ‘hand(s)’. You are simply giving whatever to the person. Therefore, when a Mankon person will say, literally “Give the yam to

my hands”, the English will say, “Give me the yam” or “Give the yam to me”.

5.13. Mood

84.

i. Declarative

Má		ɲwàʔanə		aɲwaʔanə.	
(*I		(am) writing		book.)	

→I am writing.

ii. Interrogative

Ó		ʁɛ		(á)		ʁe	
(*You		(are) going		(to)		where ?	

→Where are you going to?

iii. Exclamative

Mà kfó!

(I dead!)

→I am dead!

iv. Order / Command / Imperative

Tsá (a) bye

{*Go / Pass (to) out (side)!}

→Get out!

5.14. What/ Which

85.

fíkó	fɪɲə	(Which / What bean?)
nɪŋgɔm	nɪɲə	(Which / What plantains)
mɪluʔu	mɪɲə	(Which / What wine?)
màndzú	wɪɲə	(Which / What groundnuts?)
àzúm	zɪɲə	(Which / What thing?)

5.15. Colours

86.

- i. **bán(ə)** (red) → **á/í¹⁹ ban(ə)/bayrə** (It is reddish.)
- ii. **fɪŋ(ə)** (black/dark) → **á/í fɪŋ(ə)/fɪŋrə** (It is blackish/darkish.)
- i. **fúyɪ(-ə)** (white) → **á/í fuyə/fuyrə** (It is whitish.)
- iv. **ŋwáʔa (rə)** (variegated/multi-coloured → **á/í ŋwaʔa(rə)**
= (It is variegated/multi-coloured.

Notes

- 1 Cf fig. 16 in 7.3: (**a**) here takes the place of (**ɪ**) through assimilation. The structure is now pronounced [kâ].
- 2 The evening is the period when the Mankon people come back from the farm.
- 3 This *functor* is noun class dependent: it is **zə** for class 7 nouns and **ʒɪ** for class 9 nouns.
- 4 See footnote 76 above.
- 5 The root morpheme is **ɣáʔə** (plenty) but in the area of a preceding [u], the voiceless velar fricative [ɣ] at C1 position is prenasalised and changed to a voiced [g]. This latter voiced velar stop assimilates the [n-] regressively to [ŋ] rendering the segment syllabic.
- 6 We can also say: **Mɪ̯dzɪ̯ mɔ̯ kuʔə**.
- 7 Some class 1b nouns: **ndómə** (male of an animal/husband), **ndəmə** (witch/wizard), **ŋkùmə** (noble/notable), **ŋɔ̯ŋə** (mother-in-law), **ŋgwé** (wife), etc are [+ human] and so take the pronoun /a/ as opposed to a “thing” which takes the pronoun /ɪ/ “it”. The only exception is **mbáŋnɪ̯** (male/man) that takes the pronoun /ɪ/ (cf 7.3).
- 8 Thus **mbáŋnɪ̯ za (ɪ) karɔ̯ɪ̯** means ‘the man is very stingy’.
- 9 Note the various uses of morphemes with final schwa or not in 69i, ii and iii above. (See footnote 5).

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- 10 The surface realisation of this construct is a combination of two morphemes in the deep structure: **wu** (person locative 'him/her') + **a** (preposition locative 'to'). The vowel of C1 elides onto the following single vowel morpheme. See Leroy 2007:218.
 - 11 The **e** does not have any individual meaning but simply plays a syntactic function like **yé**. By the way, this sentence could also end... **ɓnə yé**.
 - 12 However, we must note that this word is a noun that plays the role of an adjective.
 - 13 Attributive adjectives pre-modify the noun whereas their predicative counterparts post-modify them.
 - 14 Notice the change from a falling tone to a simple high. This is because the open nuclear vowel is in the middle of a construct. The **ɓ** is now pushed to the end of the construct (See Mfonyam 1989; Neba 2006 and Tanda et al 2009:226).
 - 15 [mbyî zo] → There is a boundary contour (falling tone) here as the **ɓ** docks onto the preceding TBU instead of spreading right where it is blocked by a CV structure. (By the way, the **ɓ** causes no effect on the preceding L TBU, so docks back where it will have more tonal effect).
 - 16 An uncountable noun is singular or could be counted when it is in a container or in containers. E.g. **mîvuri** man will be 'my container(s) of oil' or 'my oil in general'.
 - 17 The *functor* 'a' is elliptical in an environment of an open vowel either before or after it.
 - 18 This one is a person pronoun.
 - 19 This is the obligatory marking of the *functor* /á/ or /ɛ̃/.

Chapter Six

The proverb in Mankon

6.1. Purpose of study

The proverb plays an important role in the society from which it is drawn and developed. A store of cultural wisdom can be passed from a *locutor* to an interlocutor by the use of proverbs. Apart from this communicative function, the proverb is also noted for its aesthetic, witty, concise and figurative ways of passing on information. Because it is replete with a lot of cultural ingenuity and embellishment, they who make frequent use of proverbs, require a good store of linguistic repertoire of the culture in question. Added to this linguistic, communicative and aesthetic importance of studying the proverb, are the moral, educative and judicial roles that it plays in society. From the above assertions, it is worth the salt for a researcher to take up the challenge into studying the form and function of the proverb.

Owing to the fact that language is society-specific, each society tends to draw its imagery from its social and cultural setting or more specifically, from the realities of its setting. This accounts for the variant forms of proverbs we have in different cultures, as exemplified in the usage of the fauna and flora characters. For instance, the English may perceive and express an idea using the characters “camel” and “straw” , while the French do so

using “le vase” and “dernière goutte d’eau” as seen in “The last straw that breaks the camel’s back”, and “La (dernière) goutte d’eau qui fait déborder le vase”.

Nevertheless, the referent and the character (both physical and mental) can change as we move from one society to another, but the sense, the substance, the meaning, the content, and most especially, the structure of a variant form of a proverb remain the same.

The interest of this chapter, therefore, is to find out whether or not, the typical SVO (Subject–Verb–Object) structure of other languages, say English, is violated by the Mankon proverb.

6.2. Methodology, data collection and analysis

6.2.1. Methodology

The data consist of a random collection of some proverbs in Mankon as used during conversation. It is not easy to ask an informant to recite the proverbs they know, because proverbs only crop up during talk, so this writer had to go round visiting public gatherings and attending conversations amongst virtuosos in the language, to collect and transcribe the proverbs as they used them. Being of the same cultural and linguistic community as his informants, he had little problems in deciphering meaning. Where he fell short, these informants were asked the specific meanings of the proverbs and how they are used in society.

6.2.2. Data analysis

The data is divided into two levels: (i) sound (phonology) and (ii) the meaning of individual words, their ordering and the relationship between them – syntax. To realise these, the proverbs are:

- a) given a phonemic transcription (orthography) in Mankon,
- b) translated word-for-word from Mankon to English,
- c) translated freely in English, and
- d) given their meanings in context.

All of the above will help someone who does not know the language and wants to do so, have an easy and successful headway. They will know how to pronounce the various words and what each word stands for and later (in Chapter Seven), the structural constituents of the proverbs will be looked at and how these constituent units relate with one another.

6.3. Review of literature

Though the proverb is as old as man himself is, very little attention has been paid to its in-depth study. Earlier works on it based their attempts mostly on collection, translation and meaning. Very little has been done on the study of its structure and the role it plays in society. This is because the proverb together with other related fields like the riddle, the folktale, etc, forms the new genre of literature – ‘folklore’. Folklore is the term given to “popular antiquities”, whose

medium of transmission is by oral tradition and handed down from generation to generation.

But the advent of science and the printing press soared researchers' interest in unravelling and analysing (scientifically) the complexities of these "verbal arts", which were then put into print form for posterity. Various societies are now interested in the study of their own proverbs for their cultural richness and wisdom. Before we go on to look at some notions and theoretical observations by some authors, it is worth the effort defining a few terms.

The "proverb" comes from the Latin word "proverbium". "Pro-" is, meant for, made for, that accompanies, that goes with; "-verbium" means, speech, or discourse. The "proverb" would then mean, "that linguistic item that goes with, as a stylistic and semantic auxiliary of 'speech'" (Mbu, 1981:27).

The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, (1973:1695) defines the term "proverb" as "A short pithy saying in common use; a concise sentence, which is held to express some truth ascertained by experience or observation and familiar to all; an adage, a wise saw."

Webster's New International Dictionary, (1959): Third Edition defines it as "A brief epigrammatic saying that is a popular by-word; an oft repeated pithy and ingeniously turned maxim; a saw; an adage...."

Abrahams in "Proverbs and Proverbial Expressions" says:

Proverbs are short and witty traditional expressions that arise as part of everyday discourse as well as in the more highly structured situations of education and judicial proceedings. Each proverb is a full statement of an approach to a recurrent problem. It presents a point of view and a strategy that is self-sufficient, needing nothing more than an event of communication to bring it into play, (Dorson, 1972: 119).

All of the above definitions aptly characterize the proverb for its brevity, conciseness, wisdom, antiquity, figurative nature, and beauty of expression. We will add by agreeing with Ruth Finnegan, (1970), that

Proverbs are generally marked by terseness of expression, abounding in metaphor... Besides their general use in legal and social life, both formally and informally, proverbs also provide the means by which generalities can be made explicit and at times provide an intricate artistic intellectual exercise for the adept (as quoted by MBU, 1981: 28).

The tone of the proverb is impersonal, though at any one time an individual or a group of persons are addressed. The final message is to man in general, as Abrahams again says, “proverbs take a personal circumstance and embody it in impersonal and witty form” (DORSON, 1972: 119).

Abrahams is perhaps, the greatest of the researchers on the proverb that makes a break-through in both its form and content. Others concentrated upon the various typology collections and meaning. Commenting on the English proverbs, Abrahams says:

The proverb developed the tradition of the literary epigram, the occasional short verse in which the same kind of moral point is made, but because of the change in the medium, from the face-to-face to a reading experience, its application to a situation had to be indicated either in a title or within the verse. This was almost surely the most important influence on the development of the heroic couplet, which has in turn provided a number of proverbs in oral currency – like Pope’s “To err is human, to forgive divine” (Ibid. , p . 118).

He goes on to add:

As artful, and therefore artificial and witty items of discourse, proverbs use all of the devices we commonly associate with poetry in English: meter, binary construction and balanced phrasing, rhyme, assonance, and alliteration, conciseness, metaphor, and occasional inverted word order and unusual construction (ibid. , p. 119).

Even though the above talks only of the English proverb, the same analysis will be true for other languages. However, because of some social and cultural similarities or differences, certain languages may at times use the same or different imagery to express the same idea.

In Mankon, very little if any, has been done on the proverb further than collection. Some other dependable documents are those of Njob (1971) and the Mankon Students' Association 'Ma.S.A' (1987f.)

6.4. Origin and meaning of the Mankon word for 'proverb'.

In Mankon, the word for "proverb" is **àkób(ə)** or **n̄ɣam nə akóbə**. Just like in other African languages where meaning to most of the taxonomic nomenclatures we give to the verbal forms is hard to come by, the meaning of **àkób(ə)** is not certain. However, following some associations and other contexts where this word is used, we can say that it means "something that is distant". This is because the Mankon people call the coastal regions of Cameroon: Limbe, Douala, Tiko (generally, the South West Region of Cameroon), etc., **nt̄ɛŋ akóbə** meaning literally "down far away land".

Some historical evidence testifies that the first Cameroonian contacts with the colonisers were in the coastal areas around Limbe, Douala, Tiko, etc., and the North. These colonialists established their missions, plantations and trade centres, and moved to the hinterlands looking for converts, labourers and trading partners.

Colonizers took away some indigenes as slaves. Because the Northern regions of Cameroon were inaccessible due to the desert here, Cameroonians from the south (Mankon inclusive), only had the first far away contacts with the coast. Since these were the farthest places, the Mankon people had gone to and back, they must have termed it **ntɪŋ akɔbɛ** after the proverb **àkɔb(ə)** for the proverb is antique and these contacts with the West are only recent.

If the above thesis is supported, then the “distance” – **àkɔb(ə)** – ascribed to the “proverb” is two-fold: on the one hand, it is distant because it is the child of antiquity handed down from one generation to the next and nobody has ever known or traced its origins and sources in relation to time and space. To some of the proverbs that have origins, we are just told that this is how they came about to be, but not when and where precisely in the community. Luther Banga must have shared this point when he said that

Les proverbes, comme d'autres genres de la littérature traditionnelle, entrent donc en possession du temps ancestral toujours un et pareil à lui-même (BANGA, 1972 : XI).

We believe this ancestral heritage is authentic because “... plus une chose est proche des ancêtres, plus elle a de la valeur (ibid. p.ix), and tend to begin our proverbs by saying: **nɪɣam nɪ bɛ-ŋgúʔu son ŋgɛ**...or **bɪtárɛ bɪɣnɛ son ŋgɛ**...which respectively mean (literally) “the talk of the

old says that..." and "forefathers of ours say that...". By beginning a proverb in the above ways, is acknowledgement of the fact that the proverb is universal and inherited. It is not a one man's affair. One man might have initiated it but the usage is communal, that is, you create it, but you put it in the communal basket for general usage. Starting a proverb without the formal opening will not be quite correct (proper), for you are doing so as if you are the author and owner of that proverb.

On the other hand, a proverb is "distant" because of its ingenuity and wisdom. Not anybody can recite a proverb, because it is distant from the reach of the "profanum vulgus" (nonprofessional). You must be initiated into it and practise it to perfection. That is why those who quote proverbs are respected in (at least the Mankon) society. Nevertheless, in the Mankon community, ownership and usage are not exclusive and exoteric; any well-able young person can quote the proverb if they have learned it well, and not only the old. This society agrees with Mbom's (1987:5) Bassa society that the audience for the proverb

est composé d'initiés qui revivent dans leur imagination la genèse et l'historique du proverbe antique, les différentes significations possibles, et exercent une critique sévère sur la diction, la maîtrise de la langue, le schéma dramatique, les

formules stéréotypées, les parties réservées à la libre inspiration.

Yes, in the recitation of a proverb, there is always that “jury informel” who judges your performance. This society again differs from Mbom’s where

...l’émission des proverbes dans notre société reste réservée aux personnalités d’un certain âge, aux vieux, ... on s’attend à ce que l’enfant écoute, qu’il apprenne et non qu’il se produise (ibid., p. 4).

This disagreement stems from the fact that the Mankon child must acquire and try to use the proverb in order to perpetrate continuity of it, since they have to hand it over to their offspring. There is the common adage that “practice makes perfect”; if they do not acquire them and try to use them through practice, they still stand the risk of using them wrongly when adults, and why not when old. Moreover, if the latter age group quotes a proverb wrongly, it is a taboo.

The main difference between this culture and that of Bassa (if the above Bassa hypothesis holds true) is that in Mankon, there are some proverbs that are easy enough to be quoted by young children and others that are very difficult for them. The difficult ones are finally got with age and brain maturation, but if a child is sharp enough and quotes them, he is respected in the society, especially

among elders, as the proverb: / **Bé mbom maŋkʰə fəm mu a mɪ dʒɪ bô bɪlyi byɛ** / (If a child behaves well, then they can eat with their elders (proverb n° 24) testifies. Children are most likely to quote proverbs like / **Ká sɪŋ-ntsu a mbvuə yi ŋkɛ** / (A “noisy” bird i.e. an nightingale can never build a nest; proverb n° 3) and / **Ŋwì ndzum-tsumə** (A cutlass with both sharp edges i.e. A double-edged sword; proverb n° 43). This is because of their simple nature (all syntactically, lexically and semantically) and the fact that they are used to these words and some of the referents are within their reach.

Conversely, proverbs like / **Ŋgyìŋə ɔ́ɔ́ɔ́ɔ́ zə sâ lé a vwo atam nə atuə** / (A stranger has fallen headlong into a pit; proverb n° 14), might not be easy for the child to quote since the structure and vocabulary (cf. 7.1.) look rather too complex for a small brain. Only a mature brain of an adult and the wealth of experience they have can enable them to quote it rightly. The complex NP (Noun Phrase) **ŋgyìŋə ɔ́ɔ́ɔ́ɔ́ zə sa...** will be difficult to produce, let alone the strange vocabulary item **àtám(ə)** which means “a booby trap”, “a pitfall”, etc. Under normal circumstances, **àtám(ə)** is a pit dug in a forest on the passage of prey animals, and camouflaged with leaves and soil above, to trap unsuspecting ones. This needs some particular expertise for it to be successful, hence an adult practice. As such, the old who practise it are more exposed to the acquisition of its vocabulary than the child who is not yet initiated into such practices.

Another word that may pose problems to the child but easy to the adult is **ngyìnə**....This word is derived from the verb form **yínə** ('come' in its imperative form) which has the noun marker "**ŋ-**" prefixed to it, to have **ngyìnə** (comer) which when used contextually with ... **àǵáǵi zə sa** will mean "a stranger". It needs only the adult to know all these complexities in language and make shut-cuts. A child expressing this same idea **ngyìnə ǵáǵi zə sa** which (literally) means "comer from a distance which is long" will rather take a round-about way of **Ŋwó wa mbaʔa a yen nə ǵáǵi zə sa**, which means the same as above. A further reason why a child would not quote certain proverbs is the taboo associated with them and a child who quotes them is considered spoilt. An adult will surely frown at a child who says / **Akwàrə-maŋgyé ka a mbɔǵi yi mbaŋnə** / (A prostitute is never afraid/scared of men; proverb n° 31.), and / **Maŋgyé wa a lɔnə mon ka a mbɔǵi yi ntɸùə** [A woman who is in need of a child is never scared by the penis (size) (proverb n° 60)]. Because both proverbs refer to sex and the human genitals, children are forbidden (socially) from quoting them.

6.5. Semantic structural analysis of the proverbs

In this section, we delve into the actual analysis of the corpus collected. We term it 'semantic structural analysis' because the nomenclature of the various typologies is based on meaning, that is, it is the meaning behind the

various types that makes us call them “rhetorical types, curse types, etc” of proverbs.

6.5.1. Instructive/Declarative/Informative/Advisory types

1. a) / **Ntò ntĩŋ tɛ ɛʃiʔi ɛ se wu be** /
b) *Shoot of a raffia-palm without mature stem cannot be there.
c) You cannot find the shoot of the raffia-palm without the mature stem.
d) This means i) the dependence of the young on the old and ii) the normal life cycle through time from birth, childhood, maturity, old-age and death.
2. a) / **Mú ngub tĩ búxə “tʃwĩ” mbə ndo ntɔŋə “kɔɔ” a se wu be** /
b) *Young fowl that has not cried “tʃwĩ” and then to crow “kɔɔ” is not there.
c) There is no young fowl that has never quacked “tʃwĩ” before crowing “kɔɔ”.
d) This proverb shows: the passage of time, patience and endurance. We should not complain that we should be this or that (especially when still young) and that we are suffering; just a matter of time we will make it.
3. a) / **Ká sŋ-tsu a mbvuə yi ŋkə** /

b) *No bird-mouthy can ever build a nest.

c) A “noisy” bird can never build a nest.

d) Here, a “noisy bird” is the nightingale. We know that a nightingale is a beautiful songbird that always perches on any tree branch and sings all night. In this culture, it is believed that this bird never builds a nest and each night it says: “do not worry, for the next day I will build my nest”, which it never does. The next day the bird is elsewhere telling the same story. Therefore, the proverb signifies that a lazy person cannot do anything productive.

4. a) / **Ndá tò azɔŋɛ lé a nə akwaŋə tɪ bɛ** /

b) *House without quarrel is world without people.

c) A household without family squabbles is just like a world without people.

d) It simply means that among people, there are bound to be differences (of opinions). It is the coming to self-realization and the acceptance of one's faults and the final resolution of these, which lead one to a better stance and in harmony with others in society.

5. a) / **Bɪ tamtə be nsə-nɪsɔŋ ká bɪ tamtə yɛ ŋkɔm atuə**/

- b) *They deceive but tooth-carver, but not deceive barber.
 - c) You can deceive a tooth-carver, but not a barber.
 - d) It means that we cannot treat negatively, what is indispensable or what we know is a source of our livelihood. Just as we cannot deceive a barber (for your hair will grow again and you go back for cutting, as opposed to a tooth-carver who does it only finally) so can we not deceive somebody we depend on or on their goods.
6. a) / **Mbyèni† † tʃi kiʔə atu tsâ** /
- b) *Shoulders cannot head pass.
 - d) The shoulders can never grow higher than the head.
 - e) This simply implies the respect for hierarchy, age and the contentment in one's inferior position if rising higher means distorting the social order.
7. a) / **Kúʔu kɔʔ n̄kaŋ ntsó mandzu n† mbo m̄tsumə** /
- b) *Do not climb the attic, carry groundnuts with both hands.
 - c) One who climbs the attic does not attempt to bring down groundnuts with both hands.
 - d) We should not risk so many projects in one single go; we should serve each master at a time or again; we should not risk all our eggs in a single basket. If we tried to bring down groundnuts

from the attic in both hands, we would not hold the ladder well; and should we lose our step, either we are unable to hold the ladder well and fall to our death, or we let go both hands of groundnuts (to hold the ladder due to fear) to spill about the house. As a result, it is safer to bring down the groundnuts in one hand to hold the ladder with the other. The English will simply say you cannot “have your cake and eat it”.

8. a) / ʃu-ndá ka ɲuʔə yɛ /
b) *A fart of the house does not smell.
c) A fart within the household does not smell bad.
d) A misunderstanding just within the members of the same house (family), society or organisation is not quite scandalous. This requires the solving of one's internal problems secretly without washing one's dirty linen in public.
9. a) / ɲàm tɪzuʔu mbəŋɪ lé a nɪ zɪ ŋkônə /
b) *Animal not hearing bell is caught one.
c) An animal that is not attentive to the sound of the bell is easily caught.
d) When we talk of 'bell' above, we mean the sound from the bell hung on the neck of a hunting dog. (This bell serves the master to locate easily his dog in the forest, but equally warns beforehand a suspecting prey animal, of the coming of the

dog.) Therefore, this proverb gives us the message that if you were impervious to counsels, you would easily find yourself in a fix or suffer a calamity.

10. a) / **Abó a lɔ bayə-nda ntsa mbyi-ndâ; ŋkɪ ndo mbyi-nda tsa bayə-ndâ** /
b) *Hand passes from inner part of room to outer and from outer to inner.
c) Tend a hand from one part of the room to another and vice versa.
d) This simply encourages mutual understanding in matters of give and take.
11. a) / **Bí ʃomə mon da bɪ tsayə be tɪŋ-ŋkuŋə** /
b) *They beat child, they send but under bed.
c) When you/they beat a child, you/they send him/her but under the bed (as opposed to casting him/her outside).
d) This means that your child or relative or intimate friend or fellow man, is considered as such; no matter what they have done wrong to you, you should be ready to accept them afterwards.
12. a) / **Ká bɪ ndzɔʔ yɛ ɸ ndzɛghɪ mbo (a) (ɪ)ʃye** /
b) *Not they rub a *Fo* [fɔ] wipe their hands on the ground.

- c) Those that 'rub' the king do not wipe/clean their hands on the ground.
- d) It should be remembered that when a *Fo* is being enthroned, the kingmakers rub him with some traditional 'medicine' which gives him strength, power, wisdom, immunity from so many sources of danger, etc. So, this proverb says that after using some material which is not yours to do something (to others), you can benefit from the remnants or dregs as these king-makers usually rub their hands on their bodies to benefit from the effects of this traditional 'medicine'.

13. a) / **Abó a se ntsu àdaŋ-adaŋə ŋkɔ́ʔə ʔe** /
- b) *Hand does not mouth for nothing climb.
 - c) A hand does not go up to the mouth without a purpose.
 - d) In this culture, it is believed that when a hand goes to the mouth, it is only for two obvious reasons:
 - i) to put food in it, or
 - ii) to raise an alarm. Therefore, if you find a hand going to the mouth without food, you know it is going to hit the lips, raise an alarm, and summon the attention of people to something terrible that had happened. (Conversely, if the hand is going to the mouth with food, we must appreciate and

honour this important act of eating even if the food is not big enough. Therefore, the proverb calls for the widow's might.)

6.5.2. Curse types.

14. a) / **Ngýìñə ɔ́ɔ́ɔ́ɔ́ zə sa a vwo atam nə atua** /
b) *Comer distance which is long has fallen into pit with head.
c) A stranger has fallen headlong into a pit.
d) A stranger is always very vulnerable to deceit from the indigenes. To avoid this, the stranger must verify from two or three people (indigenes) before making any move.
15. a) / **Ngvó tɪnɪ ɲɛ nda ɪ ɣə ŋkʰɪ tʃɛ a ntɔŋ zɪə** /
b) *Dog shitting in the house says rope is on neck his.
c) A dog shitting in the house will complain of a rope tied against its neck.
d) The proverb simply says that an unwary person will always put the blame for their misfortunes on others or other things. This is because the ensuing disgrace is hard to bear and so they want to make it lighter by attributing it to other causes and not any of theirs.

16. a) / **Bɪ lɔ mɪka mɪ ntúm ntsò kɪkan ndzɛ be mɛ ndzɛʔɛ nɪvwo** /
- b) *They find gunpowder for shooting war without seeing, to see but that to cry death.
- c) We do not have gunpowder to use at the warfront, what more of that to celebrate deaths with. (Remember that in this culture, guns are fired during death ceremonies).
- d) This means that we do not spare what we need badly for a valued purpose, on baseless things. This also requires the strict adherence to a scale of preference and priority.
17. a) / **Ngvó ʃwaʔa tɪsən mu ɪ ɣɪ ko ŋgomɛ** /
- b) *Dog hunts too much, then it will catch porcupine.
- c) If a dog hunts too much, then it stands the risk of attempting to catch a porcupine one day.
- d) Anybody who delves into doing just everything without taking note of their limitations will one day suffer the consequences. This (proverb) in English also means that fools plunge in headlong wherever angels fear to tread. We know that the porcupine has thorns (for self-defence) on its body and so makes it difficult, if not impossible, for any other animal (e.g. a dog) to attack it. Dogs know this and so, it is

but the unwary and proud dog (of its hunting abilities) that can risk going in for the porcupine.

6.5.3. Rhetorical types

18. a) / *Ò ló nē ndzē aḡere a baḡ bē fīḡ* /
b) *You ever seen an aubergine red then black?
c) Have you ever seen an aubergine that is ripe and then turns green again?
d) This proverb shows the life cycle and the passage of time. We are born, we grow to old age, die and give way to others to live their own cycle. We cannot find somebody who is at old age who suddenly transforms to a young person and relives their life.
19. a) / *Kwíʔfo a la ḡḡe nīwwo ḡwò mpfu bá le* /
b) **Kwi'fo* (a local juju) has it ever gone death of man two times?
c) Has the *kwi'fo* ever celebrated the same person's death twice?
d) This saying goes to re-enforce the fact that when something has been done, it is done with and the act still holds, no matter how much one wants a repeat or a change of it. A repeat or a change of it will not be the same as the original. Just as this juju celebrates a person's death only

once and never gets back to it, this proverb, therefore, calls for precision and vigilance when we do our things in order to avoid repetition or waste.

20. a) / **Ò byé mbyèn ÷ zɔŋ byé aʃiʔi** /
b) *You lose maggot and then lose raffia stem?
c) You cannot lose both the edible maggots and the raffia–palm stem in which they live.
d) If you face a disappointment in a highly rated goal, you can still find consolation in an inferior thing related to that goal, is the message this proverb is out to convey. It must be recalled that at its early stage of reproduction, there is a kind of beetle that feeds on and lays its eggs in the raffia–palm tree stems, causing them to wither and get dry. These maggots are edible (at least in this culture) and once they are discovered, the stems are dug up and the maggots are removed. If you are unfortunate to dig when these insects have matured and have deserted the stems, you can find consolation by carrying the dry stems home as fuel wood.

6.5.4. Retributive types

21. a) / **Àfiʔinəkán le a kfurə atuə ŋgubə** /
b) *Imitation has eaten head fowl.

- c) Imitation has been rewarded with the head of a fowl.
 - d) In the rural areas of the Mankon culture, it is customary for the person (exclusively male) who roasts a chicken to be given its head as a reward for his service. Again, imitation is considered a bad act (especially when it backfires). Therefore, it is generally good to avoid imitating people, for when this happens with adverse effects, the reward for it has been negative and this proverb is quoted to show disgust. Consequently, in other words, this proverb will just mean “serves you right,” for there is some divine justice implied.
22. a) / **Nwò a k^hí?í ìlamə yi le ÷ tsəm tɛ?ɛ wə nɪdɪyə** /
- b) *Person cuts fig–tree sap his, let sap drop only in his eye.
 - c) If one cuts a fig tree, let the sap drop only into one’s eyes.
 - d) It means that when you find trouble yourself then trouble will surely meet you. We remember that the sap of the fig tree is quite dangerous if it is exposed to eyes. So, if you fetch trouble yourself and it comes your way, do not complain for you looked for it. So, serves you right.

6.5.5. Descriptive types

23. a) / **Àmaʔaníkɔŋ ntɔwá ifan** /
b) *Spear-thrower holding the handle.
c) One who is throwing the spear and at the same time holding back the handle.
d) This proverb simply describes somebody who is suffering from indecision and lack of will power. They will always hesitate at crucial moments. If you want to throw the spear at some prey animal and at the same time, you want to hold back the spear, then you want the spear to reach your target and at the same time, you do not want it.

6.5.6. Remunerative types

24. a) / **Bé mbɔm maŋkʰə fɛm mu a mɪ dʒɪ bo b̥lɪyɪ byɛ** /
b) *If manner (of a) child clean, then he will eat with his elders.
c) If a child behaves well then he can eat from the same dish with his elders.
d) In this society, it is a taboo to find a child and elders eating from the same bowl. This is a society where propriety, decency and decorum are watchwords. However, if a child upkeeps all of the above, there is that tendency for elders to mark them as an example of a good child and so they are always favoured in many good

activities deserving praise and honour, and which are a preserve for the old and the experienced. They have bought their way into the *elderhood*; after all, is not a well-behaved child always the favourite of the elders? However, we do not only mean the disparity in age here; social standing, rank and expertise can also be used to quote this proverb.

6.5.7. Personificative types

25. a) / **Awómə a ɣamnə nstu ŋkʰə** /
b) *Hunting is speaking at mouth of net.
c) The hunters are making noises in front of their nets.
d) It means that if you want to carry out an action against somebody or something, you should be careful not to throw your secrets to the wind for fear that your target can learn of them and becomes cunning and wary such that you miscarry. If you set a net and want a game (animal for prey) to get into it, you should be quiet so that the animal can entangle itself into the net for you to catch. However, if you make noises in front of your net, these will scare the game away and you miss it.

6.5.8. Other Proverbs

26. (a) /**Ò tɛ̀nɛ̀ lɔ ɲko ɲgub le o maʔa ntɔ̀wɛ̀**/ (advisory).
(b) *You want to catch fowl then you throw corn.
(c) If you want to catch a fowl, you must throw corn.
(We sacrifice a thing to gain another, more valuable. In short, we kill to dissect; or we give a yard to take a mile.)
27. (a) /**Kúʔə ɲom nə aɲgɛ̀bɛ̀nɛ̀ ʃuʔə**/ (advisory).
(b) *Don't sun with stick drag.
(c) Never try to alter the course of the sun with a stick (however long).
(Let us allow time to time.)
28. (a) /**Ká a bɔ̀ɲə yi ɲgə o byɛ̀ nɛ̀bi tɛ̀ lentə atɛ̀ ʒɛ̀**/ (advisory).
(b) *Not good it that you pick kola nut without looking tree its.
(c) It is not wise to pick up a kola nut without minding from what tree.
(Always look before you leap.)
29. (a) /**Ntsú-nda mu mbaɲɛ̀nɛ̀ tɛ̀ azɔ̀b kâ be yi wə̀**/ (advisory; declarative).
(b) *Doorstep of child male without trouble is not there.
(c) There is no household void/devoid of misfortunes.

30. (a) /**Bí tsuʔə àlayɪ lá tʃi kɪʔɪ nɪfəŋ ni tsuʔə**/ (advisory; declarative).
(b) *They heal a wound but not the scar heal.
(c) We heal a wound but not the scar. (We may forgive, but it is difficult to forget.)
31. (a) /**Akwárə-mangye ka mbɔɣɪ yi mbaŋnə**/ (declarative; informative).
(b) *Prostitute woman cannot her be afraid of men.
(c) A female prostitute is never shy/afraid / scared of men.
(One is never uncomfortable in the face of what one is used to doing.)
32. (a) /**Alú bə-mɪsɔŋ tɪkən bə-tʃɪɣɪ**/ (declarative; instructive).
(b) *Difficult for those with teeth what more those with gums.
(c) Those with teeth cannot do it what more for those (only) with gums.
(The able-bodied are unable to do a thing what more of the disabled.)
33. (a) /**Bɪ zɛ ɲkabə ntʃwaʔə la atu atəkə**/ (declarative / informative; advisory).
(b) *They see money contributed on top of table.

(c) We can only count on money contributed when it is on the table.

(Never count your chickens before they are hatched.)

34. (a) /**Abvùə zo bé ʃwe mu ŋvo ko nə wuə**/ (declarative; blame).

(b) *Hearth yours cold then dog enters and sleeps there.

(c) If your hearth is cold, then a dog will sleep in it. (People will always take advantage of your weakness to exploit you.)

35. (a) /**Ká bɪ ntɛɣə yi ŋkyɛrɪ tɪ dʒíɣə nəʔə**/ (advisory).

(b) *Not they place the mat without sticks.

(c) We do not place the fence mat without first placing the supporting poles. (An English equivalent is “never put the cart before the horse”).

36. (a) /**Kúʔu nda nɪ ɪkon wu sâ lɔntə**/ (advisory).

(b) *Don't house with bed long beg.

(c) Never beg a room when your bed is too long. (Never inconvenience your benefactor.)

37. (a) /**Ndzɔ̀ŋ–ndzum a sé amiʔə sɔ̯ ʃe**/ (declarative).

(b) *Follower behind does not the dew suffer.

- (c) One who trails another on a bush path early morning does not suffer the dew. (One who does a thing second place does not suffer the mistakes of the first person.)
38. (a) /**Tɪzúʔu nɪɣam a ɣɛ atom ŋkwɛ nɪ ntsô** /
declarative; informative)
(b) *One who does not hear language has gone abroad and brought back war.
(c) One who does not understand a language is liable to breed confusion.
39. (a) /**Bɪ zɛʔə nɪvwo o zɔŋə nɔŋə nɪ mpfùɣɪ**/ (advisory; criticism).
(b) *They are crying death you already sleep with the widow.
(c) We are still mourning a man and you are already sleeping with the widow. (This is a criticism of one who wants to exploit a bad situation to one's advantage or one that is impatient.)
40. (a) /**Ŋkwɪŋ ɪ vwo (a) (ɪ)ʃom bɪ tɪ-ndzamə**/ (regret).
(b) *A tree (wood) it fallen on the farm of those without an axe.

- (c) Wood has fallen on the farm of those without an axe. (A good situation has occurred to those who cannot exploit it.)
41. (a) /**Ó baʔa ɪzɪ tɪ mon (de)**/ (advisory; rhetorical).
(b) *You weave a baby carriage without the baby?
(c) Are you readying the pram before the baby comes? What if it fails to come (through a still birth) or it is fatter than the pram? (Do the right thing at the right time.)
42. (a) /**Ó ɣarɪkə ŋɪɪ ɪnu tso mu o ɣɪ ko ŋgub a mɪfwuə**/ (advisory).
(b) *You hurriedly do things yours then you will catch a fowl by the feathers.
(c) If you are not attentive, then you will always do things the wrong way (and lose in the process.)
43. (a) /**Ŋwɪ ndzum tsumə**/ (descriptive).
(b) *A cutlass sides all.
(c) A double-edged sword.
(A dubious somebody; a Janus face.)
44. (a) /**Mbóm ŋwo a nɪ ŋkab ʒɛ** / (declarative).
(b) *Behaviour of a person is money his.
(c) A person's good morals are their money. (One stands to gain a lot because of one's good behaviour.)

45. (a) /**B̃ĩyĩ a sé b̃idzi be**/ (declarative).
 (b) *Those that make are not those who eat.
 (c) Creators / Makers are never beneficiaries / enjoyers.
46. (a) /**Abò mɔʔ ká ŋkorə yi n̄buʔə**/ (declarative)
 (b) *Hand one does not tie for him a bundle
 (c) A single hand cannot tie a bundle. (It calls for co-operation and collective endeavour in order to attain a goal.)
47. (a) /**Mbàŋ n̄lvuŋ á n̄ muə**/ (declarative).
 (b) *Walking stick of the old is the child.
 (c) The child is the walking stick of the old.
 {*Metaphorical*: It is the duty of the child (walking stick) to help the old.}
48. (a) /**Ŋkàʔa tsum á n̄ m̄tse m̄ īmūyə**/ (declarative).
 (b) *Twigs all are vulnerable to fire.
 (c) Twigs tied together can easily be consumed by fire.
 (An English equivalent could be ‘putting one’s eggs in one basket’.)
49. (a) /**N̄id̄īyĩ (n̄) se aŋgabə sɔbə ye**/ (advisory; declarative).
 (b) *Eye does not deer pierce.

- (c) We do not kill a deer simply by looking at it. (If you want to do a thing, be focussed at it and deal with the problem directly.)
50. (a) /**Nàm nífom í se (a) (ì)jye mbvo ndo àdaŋ-adaŋə (ye)**/ (advisory; declarative).
(b) *Meat that is fatty does not on the ground fall and gets up with nothing.
(c) A fatty piece of meat does not fall down without picking up grains of sand. ('You can't have your cake and eat it'.)
51. (a) /**Àzítəke á zŋə tɛʔɛ ndzumə**/ (regret; advisory).
(b) *Had I known follows only behind.
(c) Had I known only comes after. (It calls for caution in whatever one does such that one should never regret after.)
52. (a) /**Ká bífwi bɪ mbo ŋkuʔnə wa**/ (advisory).
(b) *Not all fingers are the same.
(c) One's fingers are not all the same. (Differences in life are inevitable.)
53. (a) /**Ŋkàʔa tɪnɪ béʔɛnə la sɪŋə kə ndo ye**/ (advisory).
(b) *Twig before breaking, the bird is also leaving.
(c) Before a twig breaks, the bird on it already flies off. (It calls for caution and alertness in order to pre-empt danger.)

54. (a) /**Ndză ɛ̃ mi akəb àɲe aʒwíʔitə**/ (declarative).
(b) *Soup is finished from bowl because of tasting.
(c) Too much of tasting depletes the soup from its bowl. (Procrastination is a vice.)
55. (a) /**M̃ɬuʔu sé mbɔŋə la ŋə bɛ̃ suɣɛ̃ ɬɛʔɛ̃ t̃sɪŋə**/ (declarative).
(b) *Palm–wine is not good because they wash the container well.
(c) Good palm–wine is not determined from the cleanliness of its container (only). (You can make good of a bad situation.)
56. (a) /**Abó be t̃ɬɪʔə ɬfəŋ t̃sən mu nɪbvúɾɪ fuə** / (advisory; declarative)
(b) *Hand that stays in anus too long, then excreta comes out.
(c) A hand (finger) that is prolonged in the anus draws out excreta. (Delays can cause undesirable consequences.)
57. (a) /**Ndəm á fuə la tɛʔɛ̃ nda mpfurə ŋwo**/ (advisory / declarative).
(b) *A vampire comes only from the house to eat some one.
(c) The enemy / devil that destroys one does not come from afar.

(A dispute from the same household is very dangerous.)

58. (a) /**Àzúmè la ñkuñe ntɔʔ mbè fú le**/ (rhetorical)
(b) *Has a thing entered palace and come out?
(c) That which is taken to the palace can never be retrieved. (Once done, it is done.)
59. (a) /**B̥ɣnə kári ñgiʔi mbiyè mu (i)ʃomə**/ (declarative).
(b) *Let us fold back the pistachio plant into the farm.
(c) Let us harness the pistachio plant from the bush into the farm. (It calls for secrets always to remain within a group or household.)
60. (a) /**Màṅgyé wa a lɔnə mon ka mbɔyè yi ntfùə**/ (declarative)
(b) *Woman who looks for child does not fear the penis.
(c) A woman in earnest need of a child is never scared of the penis (size). ('No cross, no crown'; we must sacrifice to get what we want.)
61. (a) /**Ṃgèb mpfó mu anto (ye)**/ (regret).
(b) *Gourd has died (broken) inside pot.
(c) A gourd (of palm-wine) has broken inside a wine keg.
62. (a) /**Àndubnə maṅkʰə á zaṅ ṅgə**/ (declarative).
(b) *Slap of child is painful very.

- (c) A slap from a child is hard to bear. (A disgrace from an inferior person is hard to bear.)
63. (a) /**Abó zo tʃɛn a tsu ɲwò o kúʔu nɪɣaxɪ ni lubè**/ (advisory).
(b) *Hand yours is in mouth of person, you do not jaw his/hers slap.
(c) If your hand (finger) is in someone's mouth, never smack their jaw.
(When you are in a vulnerable position, never attack others).
64. (a) /**Ó ɣɛ ɲkwatɪ ɲwò tɪʔɪ byɛʔɛ nɪkom le**/ (rhetorical)
(b) *You go to help a person then you carry the load?
(c) One who goes to help someone does not bear the brunt.
(A helper does not bear the consequences.)
65. (a) /**Ŋkyí (ɪ) ɣɪ tʃɛ nda ànto zómə**/ (declarative)
(b) *Water will be in the house, and then pot will dry up.
(c) Water will be available, yet your pot on fire will get dry (dry up).
(There will be people available who can help you but will not do so because of your past misconduct.)
66. (a) /**Ò lɔɣɪ nta(m) mayabə ntamə ɣan wu**/ (declarative).

- (b) *You take the deceit of lovers and deceive me with.
- (c) You have deceived me in the manner of unfaithful lovers.

67. (a) /**Kúʔu ɲǝɔʔ-awaŋ a muvúɾi maʔə**/ (advisory).
(b) *Do not pebbles in oil throw.
(c) Never throw pebbles in cooking oil. (Never poison/adulterate that which is used by the public.
68. (a) /**Bɿ tom ŋkyi kɿʔi mɿkuə fɿʔə ʔe**/ (advisory).
(b) *They cross a stream without legs measuring
(c) We do not do things exactly in the same manner.
(It admits differences in life.)
69. (a) /**Akùə ndzere tɛʔe atətsáʔəŋə**/ (declarative).
(b) *Leg of a thief only in mud.
(c) It is easy to trace a thief from his mud footprints.
70. (a) /**Bɿ tɿni kyem ntsò la bi kɿʔi ɪpfu bɛ ʃaŋə ʔe**/ (advisory)
(b) *They that stop a war they do not dead people count.
(c) We do not stem a war by counting the dead. (Let us learn to forgive and forget in earnest.)
71. (a) /**Ká ntwi-alamə mbóʔə yi ɪmuʔə**/ (declarative)
(b) *Not blacksmith fear him fire.

- (c) The blacksmith is never scared of hearth fire.
72. (a) /**Mĩkɔŋ tɛʔɛ ŋkáɾə**/ (declarative).
(b) *Spears only in a bundle.
(c) Unity is strength.
73. (a) /**Ŋwò wáyə ànuə ŋwo á yə ʒɛ**/ (challenge).
(b) *A person minimises thing of another, they do theirs.
(c) They that minimise what others do should do better.
74. (a) /**Tĩ-ʒé nĩ mbuʔə**/ (declarative)
(b) *If you do not know it is not a crime.
(c) Ignorance is not a crime.
75. (a) / **Ó kɔʔɔ nĩkan tɔʔɔ ɪkɔʔɔ (le)** / (rhetorical)
(b) *You climb the attic then push the ladder?
(c) Do we climb the attic and throw down the ladder?
(It advises people to allow others to benefit from what they also have benefitted.)
76. (a) /**Á mbyi-ŋgòŋ tɛʔɛ bá-bâ (yɛ)**/ (advisory).
(b) *In the world only two (in twos).
(c) In this world, togetherness is a virtue. (It emphasises unity.)
77. (a) /**Mĩtɔ ŋwò á nĩ ɪmɪyɪ miɛ**/ (declarative)

- (b) *Market of a person is eyes his.
- (c) A person's treasure is their eyes. (You gain a lot by being vigilant.)

78. (a) /**Ò kó (tʃwéʔɛ) aliʔə mɪŋɔʔɔ**/ (declarative; insult).
(b) *You work farm stony.
(c) You are farming on stony (barren) land. (Used when one is involved in a useless venture.)
79. (a) /**Mà nɪ tʃwi mpfúɾə aɲɛɛ tɪ abɔ zɛ**/ (declarative).
(b) *I am an antelope eating aubergine without bag mine.
(c) I am like the antelope that eats aubergine without saving for the rainy day.
(d) This proverb is used to advise one who does not save for the rainy day.
80. (a) /**Bɪ zɛ mbaɲnɪ la àfon ntso**/ (declarative).
(b) *They see a man in battleground.
(c) We know a man but in the war front. (We judge a man's bravery from a brave act or deed.)
81. (a) /**Bɪ maʔa ntʃwaʔa a mbo me (ɣe)**/ (declarative).
(b) *They have contributed money for me.
(c) I have had my own share of trouble / misfortune.
82. (a) /**Ó tɪnɪ tsiɲə ŋwò o ɣɛntɪnə ɣe**/ (advisory).

- (b) *You are waiting for someone, be going.
 - (c) We do not wait for someone remaining at a particular spot.
 - (d) (*Paradoxical*) The best way to wait for someone is by going so that when they meet you, a good distance of the way must have been covered.
83. (a) /**ηwò jú?u i?iη yi † lwi tèt?ε wuə abo**/ (declarative; advisory).
- (b) * A person squeezes bitter leaves his, it is bitter only in his hands.
 - (c) They that wash bitter leaves must withstand the worst of its bitter taste (on their hands).
 - (d) If you look for trouble, let trouble trouble you (only).
84. (a) /**Ò dîrî atu o dzi ndi?ə**/ (advisory)
- (b) * You are ashamed then you eat poison.
 - (c) They that are always shy suffer at the end.
 - (d) If one is never open to others one never benefits from them.
85. (a) /**Ká sîη a kuη a yε ηkàn tə mbánkə ye**/ (declarative/advisory)
- (b) *No bird enters the nest without first pretending around.
 - (c) A bird does not enter its nest directly.
 - (d) We should always be wary of what we do.

86. (a) /Bɪ warə ɸ atɪ lá bɛʔɛɸ itɪ tsa kɪʔinə/ (declarative)
(b) * They cut a king tree it breaks trees that are small.
(c) When we fell a big tree it breaks smaller ones on its fall.
(d) This is recognition of collateral damage.

Chapter Seven

Mankon proverbial syntax

After examining the phonological composition and meaning of the individual words that make up the proverb, it is worth the salt looking at the way these words are structured and organized in higher grammatical order – the sentence. Moreover, since the proverb is in sentence form, the same structural analysis that we do with the sentence will do for the proverb.

7.1. Traditional grammar subject–verb–object (SVO) order

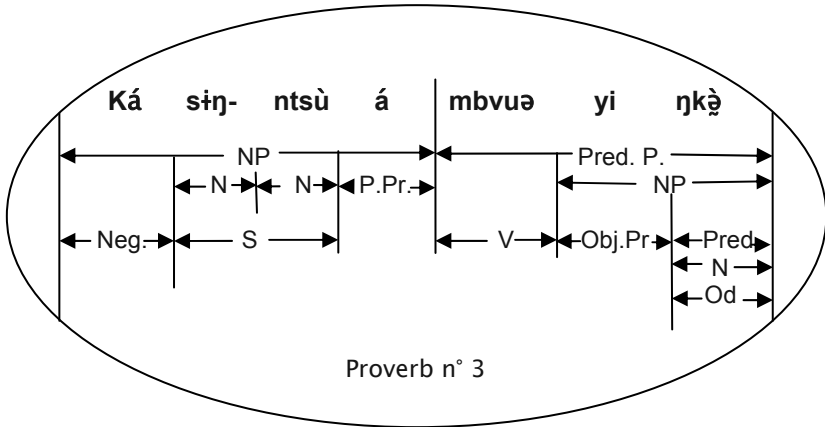
Talking about the Mankon Language, Jacqueline LEROY says:

*Nous verrons qu'à côté de l'ordre SVO,
Il existe aussi les ordres OVS, SVO et OSV.
Néanmoins, nous considérons que SVO est
l'ordre de base.*

(LEROY, 1977: 23)

Yes, there are other arrangements, but the prominent one is the SVO, where (S) is the subject, (V) is the verb and (O) is the object, as seen in the following examples:

Fig.11:



S = subject

V = Verb

Od . = Direct Object

NP = Noun Phrase

N = Noun

N = Noun

Neg. = Negation

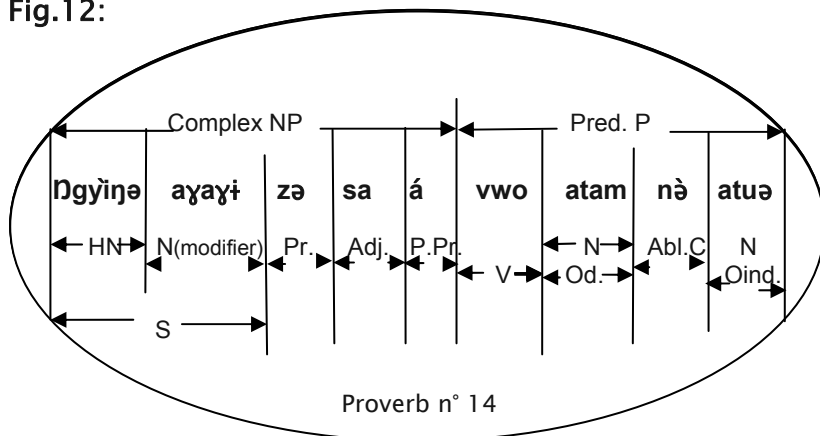
Obj. Pr. = Object Pronoun

Pred. P = Predicative Phrase

P. Pr. = Person Pronoun

Pred. = Predicate; which may
be an Od or Oind. (Indirect
Object); Complement (C);
Adj.; Adverb (Adv.);
Prepositional Phrase
(Prep. P); gerund, etc.

Fig.12:

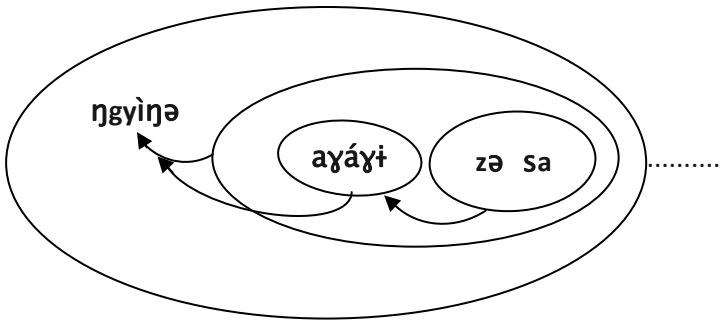


HN = Head Noun; Pr. = Pronoun; Abl. C. = Ablative Case.

The complex NP **ηγγιηə αχάχɪ zə sa ...** is composed of a head noun (HN), **ηγγιηə**, meaning “comer”, which is post-modified by ... **αχάχɪ zə sa**. Another noun **αχάχɪ(-ə)** that means “distance” post-modifies **ηγγιηə** to mean “comer from a distance” (literally). **Αχάχɪ(-ə)** is also post-modified by **zə sa...** (...which is long ...). Therefore, the whole structure literally means “comer from a distance which is long” (sic), which in current English means “a stranger”.

Following the above hypothesis, the above unit can be represented thus:

Fig.13:



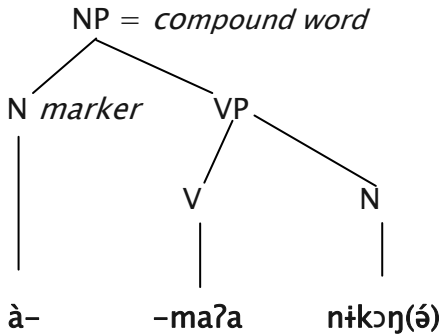
↖ = direction of post-modification and the dependence of one upon the other in that structure.

7.2. Immediate constituent (IC) analysis

The Mankon proverb in its attempt to achieve word economy brings together a combination of units and structures that are concise, but intelligently woven together. It is the interest of this study to unravel the units and see their internal constituents. An examination of a compound word, a phrase and a sentence of some proverbs will show this.

7.2.1. Word: àmaʔanikɔŋ(ə) (from proverb n° 23)

Fig.14:



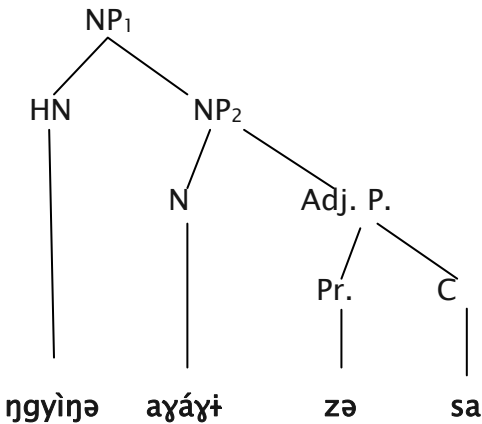
The above structure shows that àmaʔanikɔŋ(ə) (NP), has as its “immediate constituents” (ICs) –máʔanikɔŋ(ə) (VP), plus a- (N marker prefixed) and that –máʔanikɔŋ(ə) also has as immediate constituents –nikɔŋ(ə) (N), plus –máʔa- (V) prefixed. All à-, –máʔa- and –nikɔŋ(ə) are “ultimate constituents”. On the other hand, if we start with –nikɔŋ(ə) and prefix –máʔa- to it, we obtain the intermediate constituent (Inter. C) –máʔanikɔŋ(ə). We now prefix a- to the latter structure to have the final intermediate constituent structure àmaʔanikɔŋ(ə)¹.

We can adequately conclude from the above analysis that words in Mankon

when affixed, change their word class. This is so because **máʔa** (V; to throw) when prefixed by **à-** (nominal marker) gives **àmáʔa** {(verbal) N; thrower}. When the latter structure is added to **n̄kɔŋ(é)** (N), we obtain a compound word **àmaʔan̄kɔŋ(é)** (N). (**-máʔan̄kɔŋ(é)** is another verbal noun.)

7.2.2. Noun phrase: **ŋgyìŋə aɣáɣɪ zə sa** (from proverb n° 14)

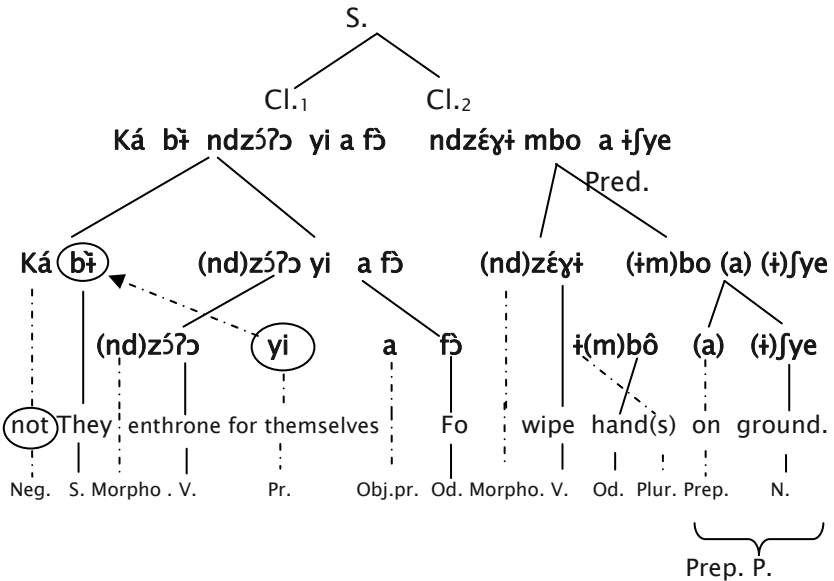
Fig.15:



HN	=	Head Noun.
Adj. P.	=	Adjectival Phrase.
C	=	Complement (adjective).
Pr.	=	Pronoun.

7.2.3. Sentence: **Ká b̃ ndzɔʔ yi a f̃ ndzéỹ mbo a ɪfye**
(from proverb n° 12)

Fig.16:



Prep. P. = Prepositional Phrase; Pr. = Pronoun; Morpho = Morphophonemic.

The above proverb overtly shows that but for the prepositional and pronoun marker – **a** (and **ɪ**) – the Mankon Language has no individual words for *functors*. Certain grammatical markers like (a-); (ɪ-); (n-); (ŋ-); (bɪ-); (m-); (mb-); (mɪ-); (nd -); etc are responsible for

the change of words from one class to another, one tense to another, or from singular to plural and vice versa . The words in brackets, open and close (), show that they do not explicitly appear on their own in the proverb (or sentence), but their being depends on some modification or alteration of the main word classes like the nouns or verbs. A few examples from the above will better illustrate this.

The nominal (pronoun) marker for **fɔ** (*Fo* or King) is /á/. This *functor* precedes the noun it represents in an accusative construction. We had earlier seen in (5.3.4.) that a nominal morpheme in Mankon has neither a definite nor an indefinite article but can have a definite or an indefinite meaning. Therefore, **fɔ** is read ‘a *Fo*’.

fɔ maŋkon – the *Fo* (of) Mankon (as a geographical entity).

fɔ wutsé/wutsére – *Fo* certain (sic) . (a certain *Fo*).

fɔ maŋkuŋə – the *Fo* of the Mankon people.

If we looked at the proverb again, we would notice that the word which precedes **fɔ** is a pronoun (Pr.) – **yí**. The [í] of this word is realised in this form before any word that begins with a consonant or another [i]. However, when the word that follows it begins with a [+ low][+ back] open [a] (cf 3.5.1: 9b and 9c and footnote 35), it is automatic that the [í] (high) of **yí** changes to [é] so that we have **yé** in the surface rendition. This is a good example of **progressive assimilation**.

Furthermore, **ndzèyɪ** is from the root **zèyɪ(-ə)** (clean/wipe; sweep). When the root word occurs in the environment of other words, it takes **n-dz-** prefixed to it which indicates the verb is in the infinitive form². In fact, when we prenasalise words (verbs and nouns) in Mankon, an extra element is inserted e.g.: [g] is inserted between [ŋ] and [y] in a word like **ngyìŋə** (comer), [d] is inserted between [n] and [z] in: **ndzɔʔ** (to rub; plaster; marry), **ndzɔŋə** (to follow), **ndzúmə** (to start a song) and **ndzɔbə** (to sing) and [l] is replaced by [d] as in **ndòmə** (is hot) from the adjective **lòmə** (hot) or the imperative verb **lwèmə** (warm it) which becomes **ndwèmə** (to warm something). {Also see a verb like **lómə** (bite).}

Abô is a class 7 noun that obtains its plurality in class 8; so the singular prefix **a-** changes to the plural prefix **ɪ-** with an additional phonological [m] inserted between it and [b] because of the influence of the latter. What really surfaces is **mbô** and not **ɪ(m)bô**.

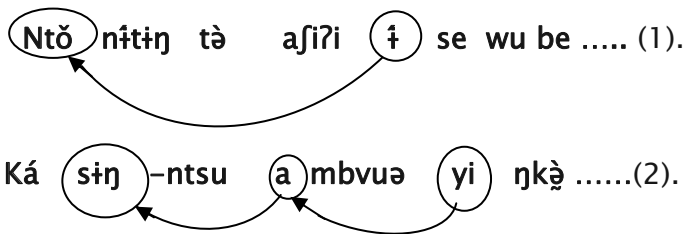
Again, **á ɪfyə** is a prepositional phrase (Prep. P.) with a cluster of words: preposition (Prep.) – “on” and a noun (N) – “ground”. **Ká-** above negates the sentence, while **yí** is related to **bɪ** (they) which it post modifies.

7.3. Deep and surface structures

The surface structure of proverbs is the form in which these proverbs are spelt out or spoken; it is their physical structure. On the other hand, the deep structure carries their meaning. Such processes like “deletion”, “ellipsis”;

“insertion”; etc. come into play when we move from one structure to another. /**Awóm a ɣamnə ntsu ŋkʰə** / (proverb n° 25) is a good example of a proverb wherein deletion is aptly exemplified. **Awóm(ə)**, in its original sense, means “hunting”; **ŋgáŋ awom(ə)**, means “hunters”. Therefore, in this proverb, when we use **awóm(ə)** to represent both the act and the people who perform the act, we achieve word economy and delete that which cannot impair intelligibility. We also say that this is an example of “personification” because the gerund – “hunting” has been given human qualities or abilities to become “hunters”.

Substitution is shown by the function markers ‘**ɛ**’ and ‘**a**’ which are pronouns and ‘**yí**’ which is a reflexive pronoun, as shown in the following two examples, drawn from proverbs n° 1 and 3, respectively:



The deep structure of (1) is **ntǒ nɛ́tɛ́ŋ tɛ́ aʃiʔi (ntǒ) sé wu be**; that of (2) is **Ká sɛ́ŋ -ntsu (sɛ́ŋ) mbvuə (ambó sɛ́ŋ) ŋkɛ́**.

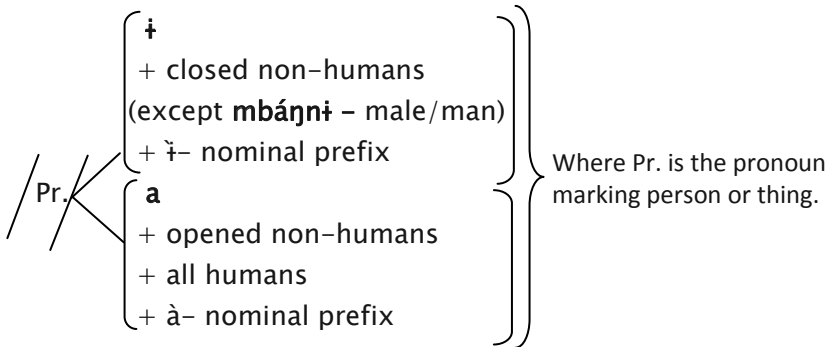
To avoid repetition, the pronoun markers ‘**ɛ̃**’ and ‘**a**’ are employed to replace (**ntɔ̃**) and (**sɛ̃ŋ**) respectively, while **yí** is used possessively to replace **àmbó sɛ̃ŋ** (i.e. for **sɛ̃ŋ**). Thus, it can be seen that both ‘**ɛ̃**’ and ‘**a**’ are pronouns that mark ‘person’. Nevertheless, the immediate question we ask ourselves is why ‘**ɛ̃**’ and ‘**a**’ to mark the same word class – the pronoun – and whether or not there is that risk of using them indiscriminately? The answer is “No” since both words appear in restrictive distribution. The very first distinction is phonological: if the last sound of the noun the pronoun marker represents is ‘closed’ or the nominal prefix is **ɛ̃-**, the marker will be **ɛ̃-** (which is also ‘closed’). On the other hand, if this last sound tends to be ‘opened’ or the nominal prefix is **à-**, the marker will be **á** (which is also ‘opened’); e.g.

ntɔ̃	(ɛ̃)	} above in (1 and 2).
sɛ̃ŋ(ə)	(á)	

An additional difference is that ‘**ɛ̃**’ marks only non-human nouns {except **mbáŋɛ̃** (man/male)} that obey the above rule, while ‘**a**’ marks all human nouns and some non-human nouns (of class 7) that conform to the above phonological rule.

This concept can be represented diagrammatically as:

Fig.17:



Lastly, the ‘complex proverb’ contains a number of structures worth discussing. If we consider proverb n° 2 : / **Mún ngub** (**tĩ buyə** “**tʃwĩ**” **mbə ndo ntɔŋə** “**kɔɔ**”) **a se wu be**/, we would see that it is made up of a “main clause” – /**mún ngub a se wu be**/, and a subordinate clause (adjectival) – /**tĩ buyə** “**tʃwĩ**” , **mbə ndo ntɔŋə** “**kɔɔ**”/. The main clause means, “There is no young fowl ...” and then we ask ourselves the questions: “that has done what? Or what young fowl?” The answer will be our subordinate clause: “...that has not quacked “**tʃwĩ**” before crowing “**kɔɔ**” which acts as the adjective qualifying **mún ngub(ə)**.

7.4. Binary division

Abrahams in an article “Proverbs and Proverbial Expressions” published in Dorson’s *Folklore and Folklife*

(1972), discusses this “balanced structure” of proverbs. Treating English proverbs, he says:

It is primarily the pronounced effect of balance that produces the witty effect of the proverb, and this balance arises most notably from a binary (two-part) composition. The proverb is generally a sentence that is perceptibly broken in the middle (DORSON, 1972:120).

He goes on to say that the break is a **caesura**; e.g.

A stitch in time / saves nine.

A rolling stone / gathers no moss.

A bird in the hand / is worth two in the bush.

He continues to say, “These two or more elements are usually tied together either by a verb of equivalence or a verb of causation,” which may be either positively equivalent or negatively equivalent and positively causational or negatively causational. He further says that a feeling of relationship is commonly provided by the equivalent or causational verb between the two elements that gives a sense of verbal stability that seems to be transferred to the social situation that the proverb names and comments upon.

Taking a few proverbs from Mankon, we can exemplify what we have been saying:

7.4.1. Positive equivalence

Ndá t̃ azɔŋɛ lé / à n̄ akwán̄ t̄ b̄ (proverb n° 4).

B̄ ʃomə mon da / b̄ tsayə be t̄ŋ-ŋkuŋə (proverb n° 11).

7.4.2. Negative equivalence

Nt̄ n̄t̄ŋ t̄ afiʔi / ʔ se wu be (proverb n° 1).

Àkwarə-maŋgyé / ka a mbɔʔə yi mbaŋnə (proverb n° 31).

7.4.3. Positive causational.

Ò t̄n̄ l̄ ɲko ŋgúb le / o máʔa nt̄fwɛ (proverb n° 26).

Abvùə zó be ʃwe mu / ŋgvò ko n̄ŋ wuə (proverb n° 34).

7.4.4. Negative causational

Ká s̄ŋ-ntsu / a mbvuə yi ŋk̄ (proverb n° 3).

Ndz̄ŋ-ndzum / á se am̄ʔə s̄ ʔe (proverb n° 37).

The slanting line (/) shows where the “caesura” comes in just before the verb of equivalence or causation, dividing the proverbs into two balanced parts.

Abrahams, in this very article goes on to say that each half of the binary division, is itself divided into two – a “dipod” – containing one primary (//) and a secondary (/) stress. This is also true in the Mankon proverb, but with variations (according to tones) due to the fact that Mankon is a tonal language as opposed to English which is stress-timed:

ENGLISH

A stit^{//}ch in tí[/]me / sá^{//}ves ní[/]ne
 A ról^{//}ling stó[/]ne / gá^{//}thers nó[/] moss
 /----dipod --/ /---dipod-----/ } (Dorson, 1972 :120)

MANKON

Ndā^{//} tē azō[/]hī[/] lé / à nī akwā^{//}hē tī[/] bē (proverb n° 4).

Bī^{//} fō[/]mā mō[/]n da / bī^{//} tsā[/]hē be tī[/]h-kū[/]hē (proverb n° 11).

Ntō nī^{//}tī[/]h tē a[/]fī[/]ī / ɛ sē^{//} wu bē (proverb n° 1).

Ò tī[/]nī lō^{//} hko hū[/]b le / ò má^{//}ʔa nt[/]fwē (proverb n° 26).
 /----- dipod -----/ / ----dipod -----/

7.5. Paradigmatic and ‘syntagmatic’ (syntactic) relations

In grammar, when we talk of paradigmatic and syntactic relations, we mean the way grammatical units are arranged, ordered, sequenced and patterned vertically (paradigmatically) or syntactically (horizontally) to form meaningful and acceptable higher units like the word, the clause and the sentence. Acceptability is on a three-plane level: syntactically (grammatically), semantically

(meaningfully) and sociologically (according to social norms).

7.5.1. Characterisation

... classifying folktales by dramatis personae... was misleading, for the same action in variant tales could be performed by an ogre, a dragon, the devil, a giant, or a bear . But the action remained constant, and one action episode followed another in a fixed pattern... (DORSON 1972: 34)

The characters in these tales differ according to the different geographical and cultural areas In the Savannah regions of Cameroon, Nigeria and Ghana, the animal trickster is the spider. In the forest zones in East and Central Africa, it is the hare. No matter what names they assume, these animal tricksters have several things in common... (TALA 1972: 4)

Both assertions above agree that the character (physical or mental) in all the tale, the proverb and the riddle which together form our genre of literature 'folklore' , is not closed, fixed or static , but open and dynamic as one moves from one cultural milieu or environment to another . If the whole proverb itself varies with culture, what more of the character in it. A biblical proverb:

“An ¹*eye* for an ¹*eye*, a ²*tooth* for a ²*tooth*”, has an equivalence among the Nandi of East Africa as:

“A ^a*goat’s hide* buys a ^a*goat’s hide* and a ^b*gourd* a ^b*gourd*,” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*). Both proverbs form part of codes of behaviour, and exemplify the proverb’s use for transmission of tribal wisdom and rules of conduct. One of the proverbs above must have got its adaptation from the other using the paradigmatic and syntactic relationships to generate a new proverb whereby (1, 1; 2, 2) corresponds with (a, a; b, b).

Similarly, the same proverb may have so many variants, e.g.

- i) English: “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush” or “One ... in the net is worth 100 flying.”
- ii) Italian: “Better one in the cage than four in the harbour.”
- iii) Rumanian: “Better a bird in the hand than 1000 on the house.”
- iv) Portuguese: “Better a sparrow in the hand than two flying.”
- v) Spanish: “A sparrow in the hand is worth a vulture flying.”
- vi) German: “A sparrow in the hand is better than a crane on the roof.”
- vii) Iceland: “Better a hawk in the hand than two in flight.”

viii) Mankon: / **Bɛ̃ zɛ̃ ɲkab ntɔwaʔa la atu atɛkə** /
(proverb n° 33).

(We can only count on contribution money when it is on the table.)

Yes, just as we can only count on a bird, a sparrow, a hawk, etc. when it is already in the hand or in the cage, so can we only count on money that is already contributed on the table of a meetinghouse. Conversely, we cannot count on those birds that are in the bush, on the roof, etc. just as we cannot count on money that is still in the contributor's pocket. (In case, they fail to contribute for one reason or another.)

7.5. 2. Generativism

When we talk of 'generativism' in grammar, we mean that ability to create or produce meaningful novel structures following already known internalized rules, as Lyons, (1968: 140) testifies that 'generative description' will then mean, "... 'explaining' the native speaker's ability to produce and understand an indefinitely large set of potential utterances". Since language is dynamic and changes with time, new structures come in to replace, modify or add to the old ones. This is very true of the Mankon proverbs whereby new ones are created to add to the old ones, modify them or provide variant forms for them. However, as aforementioned, these proverbs (old and new) must have both the paradigmatic and syntactic relationships:

/---s ---	Neg -P.Pr---	V--Refl.Pr.-Od--/				
Sɛ̃ŋ-ntsu	ka	a	mbvuə	yi	ŋkə̃	(proverb n°3)
The swallow	never		makes		a home	(English)
/--dipod-/	/-----dipod-----					

The above two proverbs are the same in meaning and form, but differ in character. While the English see ‘the swallow’ as a bird that never builds a home, the Mankon people see “**sɛ̃ŋ-ntsu(ə)**” – the nightingale. Therefore, we can postulate that one of the above cultures might have generated or adapted its own proverb following the vertical and horizontal relationships. It should be noted that the vertical arrangement contains words of the same class, while the horizontal contains words of different connotations and meanings. If we say

- 1) The home never builds a swallow* or
- 2) **Ŋkàñ³ ká a mbvuə yi sɛ̃ŋ-tsû***, we will realise something is seriously wrong about their meanings (semantics) though the sentences are grammatically (syntactically) correct, just like Noam Chomsky’s “Colorless green ideas sleep furiously”. It is, thanks to ‘generativism’ that new and modern proverbs like / **Akwárə-maŋgye ka ambɔ̃ɔ̃ yi mbaŋnə** / (proverb n° 31) have been created. “**Akwárə** – a Pidgin English lingua franca term for both the act of prostitution and the prostitute themselves, comes

about due to modernism and its ills. Mankon thus, has borrowed the term directly into her vocabulary and has employed it.

If we agree that the proverb is free and dynamic, we do not mean that you can alter it without paying regard to its rules: if we want to adapt a proverb, we do not take part of it, change and use, while the other part remains unchanged. A proverb, once created, is standard; only a variant form can be given. The following joke proverbs broadcast over Cameroon Radio Television (CRTV) – Radio Bamenda, on Saturday, 28th July 1990 during a programme – “Taking Care Business (TCB)” go a long way to show the oddity of altering part of a proverb:

- Those that live in glasshouses “are rich” (sic)
 (“should not throw stones”).
- A bird in the hand “cannot fly again” (sic)
 (“is worth two in the bush”)
- A rolling stone is very dangerous” (sic)
 (“gathers no moss”)
- All that glitters is “very expensive” (sic)
 (“not gold”).

7.6. The negative and the adjective

The negative (cf 5.8.) in Mankon is indicated by such elements like, **kúʔu(ə)**, **kíʔí**, **tí(té)**, and for the most part by **ká** – a functional mobile element in a sentence:

Ká sɪŋ-ntsu a mbvuə yi ɲkɛ (proverb n° 3).
Sɪŋ-ntsu ka a mbvuə yi ɲkɛ }

The adjective resembles that of the French Language: it comes after the noun it qualifies and not before it as in English. LEROY (1977:23) confirms this: “L’adjectif suit le non qu’il détermine”. E.g.

Sɪŋ-ntsu(ə)... (Proverb n° 3).
Ntô nɪtɪŋə.....(Proverb n° 1).
Mbàn-nɪlvunə... (Proverb n°47).
Ŋwò manɲunə.....A Mankonian.

Mankon }

- We must recall that the underlined are nouns which play the roles of adjectives.

Tall John
Beautiful girl

English }

Un homme gentil
Une route bitumée

French }

7.7. Style.

By style here, we mean the manner the proverb is built; generally, its form and its characteristics as opposed to

its content. It should be noted that the Mankon proverb takes many forms, a few of which will be discussed below:

7.7.1. Pictorial expressions and hyperbole.

This type of proverb is built around gross exaggeration (hyperbole) and we need only mental pictures and images for it to be realized:

/ Kúʔə ɲom nə aŋgɪbnɪ ʃuʔə / (proverb n° 27).

Of course, we cannot use a simple stick (no matter its length) to alter the course of the sun (which is natural) to our favour. This saying actually goes a long way to confirm the metaphorical nature of the proverb; it is by matching meaning with what is actually expressed, that the proverb achieves its authenticity.

7.7.2. Dialogue

Quite often, the tone of some proverbs is conversational; there seems to be an addresser passing on a message to an addressee in the very nature of the proverbs themselves:

Ò tɪnɪ lɔ ŋko ŋgub le ò máʔa ntʃwɛ (proverb n° 26).

Ò ló nə ndzɛ aɲɛɛ a baŋ mbə fɪŋ (proverb n° 18).

This dialogue is only apparent, for we know the tone of the proverb is impersonal. The personal pronoun “Ò” –

(you) – is not directed to a single person or to a group of persons, but to the completely human race. The speaker is addressing everybody, though at a specific time of quoting the proverb, there may be a listener or listeners in focus.

7.7.3. Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is an instance where the sound suggests the meaning. Some proverbs in Mankon make frequent use of this:

Mún ngub tɪ buyə “tʃwĩ” mbə ndo ntɔŋə “kɔɔ” a se wu be (proverb n° 2).

The “tʃwĩ” here, suggests the noise made by the fowl when it is still young, but when it is mature, it makes “kɔɔ” noises. This shows some time transition from the young to adulthood in man.

7.7.4. Alliteration, Assonance and Rhyme

All of the above operate in the following proverb:

4 1 5 4 5 4 1 4 2 4/6 3 4 4 1 2 4/6 2 5 1 2 4/6
Abó a lo a bayɪ–ndâ ntsá a mbyì–ndâ;ŋkɪ ndo mbyì–ndâ

3 4 4 1 4 2 4/6
ntsá a bayɪ ndâ (proverb n° 10).

(1, 2 and 3), above are same consonant sounds respectively repeated in the same line of the proverb (Alliteration).

(4 and 5) are same vowel repetitions in the proverb which when taken in that order, will give 'Assonance'. (6) is the repetition of the same sound at the end of a sense group or sentence (Rhyme).

7.7.5. Use of homely images

The images that the Mankon proverb uses are quite simple, plain and commonplace; the proverb draws the plain-sense objects from the natural environment.

- **Ngúb(ə)** and **ntɔwì** -----fowl and maize (proverb n° 26).
- **sɛŋ(ə)** -----bird (proverb n° 3).
- **nɛbi(ə)**-----kola nut (proverb n° 28).
- **màndzu(ə)** -----groundnuts (proverb n° 7).
- **àŋéré**-----aubergine/eggplant (proverb n° 18), etc.

7.7.6. Man, as a false generic.

In traditional Mankon, the word **mbáŋni(-ə)** (man/male) is predominantly used as if **màngyé** (woman) does not exist, such that in the proverb:

/ **Ntsú-nda mu mbaŋni tɛ azɔb ká ɪ be yi wə** /
(proverb n° 29),

we simply have male dominance in the words **mú mbaŋni(-ə)** (a young man). Where do we place **mú**

màṅgye (a young woman)? This question should not come up because, in a family, it is the man who is at the head and it is a taboo for a woman to remain unmarried, talk less of building her own home and be head (at least in this culture). However, the advent of modernism and women's emancipation has caught the Mankon people in an embarrassing situation, so that male chauvinism becomes anachronistic. What are they (people) to do now since the proverb is a product of ancestral heritage and must be quoted exact? They are to find such an answer in the meaning and not the form of the proverb. As we saw in (7.10.), the proverb is impersonal and does not have a particular audience to address, but the completely human race. So, the word **mbàṅni(-ə)** – (man) has been accepted as a microcosmic false generic for both it and **màṅgyé** (woman).

7.7.7. Metonymy

This is an instance where part of a thing represents the whole. In the proverb: / **Nàm tɪzuʔu mbəṅni lé a ni zɪ ŋkonə** / (proverb n° 9), “**mbəṅni(-ə)**” (bell) is a specially made bell attached to the neck of a hunting dog so that its movements can be traced (by listening to the sound of the bell) when it has gone far into the bush. Therefore, when the dog is coming from afar, any attentive “**nàm(ə)**” (prey animal) should hear the sound of the bell and run away. That which is unwary is easily tracked down by the

dog(s) and the hunter(s) and caught. The “mbə̀ηni(-ə)” (bell) in the above proverb does not only mean the literal “mbə̀ηni(-ə)”, but the dog; so the “bell” is *metonymous* to “dog”.

The above structural analysis of Mankon proverbs cannot be exclusive. This writer has simply pointed out some of the many salient structures that he knows. It is now left to other researchers to add and improve upon what is analysed above.

Notes

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- ¹ Note the change of tone from high in the verbal form and low in the nominal form.
 - ² In other environments, it prefixes the perfective form of the verb and some verb-derived nouns. (See Mankon Morphophonemic rules at 3.7.)
 - ³ Note the two spellings of **ηkàn** and **ηkə̀** (nest) at various environments in a sentence.

8.1. Preliminaries

A proverb can only be understood when our fluid and imaginative mind goes deep into the context in which it is used and probe the complexity of its meaning. This is because the language of the proverb is metaphorical and the physical words that convey the proverb stand for various concepts in life. If you know the society and the context, it will be easy for you to decipher the meaning of any proverb. Knowing the particular context is important because quite often, a proverb quoted can hold true in many situations, and so you must limit yourself to the occasion during which a particular proverb was quoted. In Mankon and other cultures, the themes indicative of situations and occasions when a proverb is used, are very vast. Generally, the proverb criticises, approves or disapproves of human and sometimes, animal behaviour. The following are some of the themes common to proverbs: advice, rebuke, ridicule, death, retribution, warning, curse, oppression, hatred, jealousy, greed, ingratitude, gossip, nepotism, social status, personal achievement, etc. Some of these themes can be conveniently grouped under such functions as linguistic communication, judicial, educational and aesthetic.

8.1.1. Linguistic communication

In Mankon, the women practise what we would call ‘group farming’. A group of women and young girls would organise themselves on a specific day, and choose a member of the group on whose farm they are to work. They till and plant the latter’s farm and the next day they would go to another’s. They continuously alternate in this manner until the entire group members are served.

It was on one of such farms one day that a funny incident took place. An elderly woman, who had almost stripped bare her upper part of the body, but for her brassiere (due to the tropical African heat) had dug out a cricket and as the insect tried to escape, she jumped several ridges after it. Her brassiere gave way as she ran, such that her hanging breasts swung from left to right and right to left, like a pendulum. The young girls with pointing breasts among the group laughed at the woman’s sagging breasts. This woman was so touched that she quoted this proverb: / **Ntò nítɪŋ tɛ ɔfɪʔi ɛ se wu be** / (proverb n° 1), meaning, “You cannot find the shoot of a raffia palm without the mature stem”. This proverb is highly metaphorical and full of meaning: the “shoot” represents the young girls and the “mature stem” stands for the woman. She is in effect saying that she once had breasts like those of the girls, but age had sagged or made hers flabby to the point that she could not alter the course of nature. She is again saying that “today is for me, but tomorrow will be for you.” The girls will not

forever remain young with pointing breasts: theirs will fall as they too get old and so they should not laugh at her.

This woman quoted this proverb to instruct and perhaps curse these girls (and others) who go out of the social norms. The young are supposed to respect the old who have given birth to, and are protecting them. If we looked at the raffia plant, we would see that the new growth (shoot) is always wrapped up and protected in the middle by the mature stems. If the old (stems) give birth to and protect the young (shoot), the former expect some allegiance to them by the latter. It is not a question of the young getting up one day to challenge them for / **Mbyè?nɪ ɛ tʃi kiʔi atu tsâ** / (proverb n° 6), signifying “the shoulders cannot grow higher than the head”.

One of the girls’ mother intervened and cursed her daughter that / **Ò ló nə ndzɛ aɲɛɛ a baŋ mbə fɪŋ** / (proverb n° 18), meaning, “Have you ever seen an aubergine that is ripe and then has turned green again?” It is not the fault of the woman who has “ripened” like an aubergine and cannot come back to the “greenness” of these young girls. However, mark you, girls: you will not remain green forever; you are ripening too.

The girls had to confess their error by saying / **Á nɪ ɪfə ɪnuə, bɪʔi ko mi-lɪŋnə** / (All is a mistake and we are sorry for that) before order was reinstated. In order to insure that forgiveness is granted these girls by the wronged old woman, another woman cut in to give a judicial decision begging her that / **Bɪ ʃomə mon da bɪ tsayə be tɪŋ-ikúŋə** /

(proverb n° 11), “When you beat your child, you should send them but under the bed”; (as opposed to sending them outside). This proverb ascertains forgiveness after the wrongdoer has confessed. The idea expressed by proverb n° 1 above is the same as that of the English when they say, “People who live in glass houses should not throw stones” i.e. (If you are in a vulnerable position, do not attack others). We see that these girls are vulnerable to old age and sagging breasts, when they come of age, but they attacked (through laughter) the woman who is already at this stage (which is natural). We notice here the deleterious effects of a non-verbal communicative act (laughter) of the girls.

8.1.2. Judicial function

Dorson (1972) reported that John Messenger observed the judicial employment of the proverb among the Anang in Nigeria. A plaintiff was shown some sympathy in court when he quoted the following proverb against a thief: “If a dog plucks palm fruits from a cluster, he does not fear a porcupine”. This proverb means that if a dog could pluck the fruits from an oil palm bunch in spite of its sharp needles, he would not hesitate in tackling a prickly porcupine. This follows that a man who is known to steal regularly will not hesitate to steal from his neighbour. The defendant managed to turn the tide rising against him in his favour by saying: “A single partridge flying through the bush leaves no path.” Since a covey of partridges can be traced by the bent grasses they leave on their trail, this

saying implies that a single, friendless individual carries little weight and will be unfairly judged. He was thus acquitted (DORSON, 1972: 21f.).

The Mankon people would use the following variant proverb to levy an accusation on a habitual thief: / **ká ntwi-alam** [ntwɛlam] **a mbɔɣə yi mugə** / (proverb n° 71), which signifies “A blacksmith is never afraid of fire”. Because a smith is used to the scorching heat of his forge, he would face no heat problem when he is exposed to say, hearth fire. In the same vein, a thief who is used to stealing would not hesitate to pick up any object for fear that they would be caught or simply, for morality sake. After all, accidents do not stop people from driving. If in court, the accused thief puts up a weak defence that they are not guilty of what they are accused of and that they ever stole the said object for fear of being caught and punished or that they consider stealing ungodly, the above proverb can be quoted to squash off their attempts to evade the law.

The Mankon community is quite aware of the fact that in this world, there is bound to be differences among people, and that nobody is infallible. After all, do the English not say: “To err is human, to forgive divine.” However, when differences crop up between people, these should be solved as amicably as possible. These differences of opinion are most rampant in marital homes as exemplified by frequent quarrels. These quarrels come up mostly between newly married couples because they

had not lived together for a long time to understand what each other likes or dislikes. Very often, the newly married bride (*mɪŋgən*) deserts {*sám(ə)*} the marital home to her father's compound after minute quarrels. When this happens, it is a bad father or mother who would say to his/her fugitive daughter "Come and stay with me, daughter; I knew from the very beginning that 'they' would kill you in that marriage home of yours. After all, does my house stink that I have sent you to go and stay in another person's house?" Instead, both parents would wait for their daughter's husband and father-in-law to come so that they look into the problem and solve it. In like manner, a bad husband and father-in-law would sit back and hit their chest in arrogance and say: "Let her go, there are other women to replace her". These latter two are customarily supposed to carry palm-wine to their in-laws' compound if "their" wife runs away, and the two families seek ways by which the dispute could be settled.

When the two families sit, they would be discussing while drinking the palm-wine that the "husbands" of the girl had brought. They would listen to complaints from both the husband and the wife. Quite often, these complaints are childish ranging from the refusal by the husband to eat food prepared by his wife because he still attaches himself to his mother's apron strings, through the wife always nagging at small errors committed by the husband, to the wife not warming water for her husband's bath on time, etc. The two parents would caution their

children on proper conduct after the latter two had promised in front of their parents that there was nothing wrong and that such incidents would never repeat themselves again. Their parents while advising them would quote a proverb like / **Ndâ tɛ azɔŋɛ lé a nɛ akwaŋɛ tɛ bɛ**/ (proverb n° 4), “A household without family quarrels is just like a world without people.” This is just to let them know that as they live together, there are bound to be bits of misunderstanding between them but that they should try to overcome these misunderstandings themselves. When they quarrel, they should reinstate order and be cheerful afterwards.

The couple is advised that they should solve their family problems by themselves in order not to wash their dirty linen in public. The dispute that the parents had just settled should be the last, they would say, and they (parents) would continue by praising the woman for running only to her father and not to a third party. Worst still, a bad woman would have run but to a lover. Because / **ɛfu-ndá kâ ɲuʔə yɛ** / (proverb n° 8) meaning “a fart within a household does not smell bad”, let bygones be bygones. The “fart” (mess) would have smelt bad if it went beyond the household to the smelling by neighbours who would have had a bad impression of the couple and their parents. In this culture, the misconduct of a child reflects that of their parents.

8.1.3. Educative function

This category of proverbs is centred mostly on the child and their upbringing. When a child is born, they need behaviour formation until they are mature enough to think for themselves. The later life of a person would depend largely on the learning they had as a child. By quoting proverbs, a great deal of this education is attained. However, to say that proverbs are used in educating mostly the child is not to mean that the adults are exempted. In fact, a Latin adage says it all: “Tota vita scola est.” – ‘All life is school). Imbuli re-iterates that “All the Ekonda educate themselves from birth to death, using their proverbs” (EDUCAFRICA, 1982: 157). He goes on to sum all that we have been saying above that

...at the very heart of the Ekonda proverbial corpus sits the child. Because ‘the child is a growing being while with the adult, size and shape are already defined; but in the child, there is a sort of future force containing the germ of the future ego; the child is an essor, a forward notion, the adult in will more than in power. So the child is defined as a plenitude of projects, a will to dare, an opening into multiple horizons’ (Ibid., p. 156).

Ingratitude and insincerity are some of the ills that the Mankon society kicks vehemently against. If you borrow something from somebody, make sure that you give it

back when you have finished using it; if somebody does well to you, make sure you do the same to them; if someone smiles with you, you smile with them also. These are lessons that this society teaches its subjects. If you go against these rules and norms set down by the society, you stand the penalty of being ostracised and treated nastily.

It was in the light of this that one Pa Tabo, a palm-wine tapper, gave Pa Tikum a nasty handling. Pa Tabo, one day had carried his morning's wine collection in a large calabash, to the local market at Ntsualam for sale. Pa Tikum, one of the many palm-wine petty traders who buy the wine at local markets and retail this to women-vendors in town-bars, came and took one of his calabashes of wine and added to others he had bought. Pa Tikum had bought so much wine that he was short of money, so he told Pa Tabo that he would pay for the wine when he would be back after the sales in town. The two were neighbours and so Pa Tabo never hesitated to give the wine; he counted very much on his fellow villager's sincerity. When the trader came back from town, he never gave the money. His benefactor made several calls to his compound, but all in vain. At each visit, Pa Tikum would lie that he gave the wine to a woman in town on credit basis and would give Pa Tabo's due immediately he took the money. This was never done and Pa Tabo was annoyed, for he wanted to use the money for pressing needs.

Another day, there were so many death celebrations in Mankon such that palm-wine was scarce. Only Pa Tabo who produced wine in large quantities had some more wine. People scrambled to his house. Among these was Pa Tikum who was celebrating the second burial of his father who died a year ago. He remembered that he owed Pa Tabo and so, this time he was brandishing in his hand money for the same quantity of palm-wine he took from Pa Tabo the other day. Pa Tabo pretended to treat him kindly and took the money but never gave the wine. He simply told Pa Tikum that / **Bɛ̃ tamtə be sɔ̃-n̩sɔ̃ ká bɛ̃ ntám̩tə yɛ̃ ŋkɔ̃m̩ə atuə** (proverb n° 5), meaning, “You can deceive a tooth-carver, but not a barber”. Just like, you cannot deceive a barber after a haircut because you will still come to him when your hair grows again, (unlike the tooth-carver who does this only finally), you cannot also deceive somebody on whom you depend very much. Therefore, the message here is very clear: “You can run but you cannot hide”, “Ninety-nine days for the thief, but one day for the owner”, etc. With these proverbs, injustice, ingratitude and insecurity are at least kept at bay in any society.

8.1.4. Aesthetic function

In the previous chapter, topics like pictorial expressions, hyperbole, dialogue, onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance, rhyme and the use of homely images were discussed under “style “. These also, are aesthetic devices. The repetition of

the same vowel sounds (assonance) and the alliterative sounds and end rhymes of the following proverb gives the proverb a musical tone: / **Abó a lɔ a bayi-ndâ ntsá a mbyi-ndâ; ɲkɛ̃ ndo mbyi-ndâ tsá bayi-ndâ** / (proverb n° 10). This lyricism is also evident in the onomatopoeic sounds of “cwî” and “kɔɔ” in / **Mú ɲgub tɪbuɣə “tʃwî” mbè ndo ntɔɲə “kɔɔ” á se wu be** (proverb n° 2)

We shall allow what has already been treated to concentrate on other aspects where vivid description, witty statements and condensed prose narrative add to the beauty of the proverb.

The proverb is noted for its descriptive force. In your mind's eyes, you would have an exact picture of what is being described within a twinkle of an eye. This descriptive force draws the associated meaning from the world of the abstruse and matches it with the physical description. A proverb which describes someone as / **Amáʔanikɔɲ ntʃwa ifan** / (proverb n° 23) i.e. “One who is throwing the spear and at the same time holding back the handle”, gives us the picture of someone who is caught between two worlds and suffering from indecision. They want to do something, yet they do not. The English will call this type of person one who wants to “have their cake and eat it”. Furthermore, when we say / **Ŋwí ndzùm tsumə** / (proverb n° 43 – “A cutlass with both sharp edges”, we draw the mental picture of some dubious character. It is just like saying one has a Janus face.

It is said that the proverb has that aesthetic ability of wittily condensing and contracting a long story within a few words. When the English say in four words: “Man proposes, God disposes”, we have that impression of man’s subservience to fate and destiny; that impression that man has no control over the whims and caprices of the forces that are above them, and any efforts to try to circumvent the sorry plight set down for man would be vain. This proverb would tell in a few words the story of a young man with nice and ambitious projects ahead of him. Nevertheless, he never lived long to execute them because the cold hands of death snatched and nipped him in the bud.

In Mankon, the following proverb tells a long story in a few words. The story is highly witty and metaphorical and gives the deserved beauty of the proverb: / **Ò kó (nɔ̃wɛʔɛ) aliʔə mɪŋɔʔɔ̃ àso zo mí wu/** (proverb n° 78) – “You have ‘caught’ and farmed a stony piece of land, so that your hoe gets used up.” In this culture, a large stretch of land which was not hitherto being farmed (because it was reserved for specific purposes , e.g. grazing , hunting , etc.) can be declared farming land by the authorities concerned (e.g *Fo, Nkum, Tatse* , etc.) . Because the land has not been farmed for such a long time, it is very fertile and women are feverish about getting as much farming land as possible out of here. Therefore, land is “caught” when these women secure so many patches of it by hoeing straight lines round it to ward off other women

farmers. However, when securing a piece of land, you must guard against stones. Stony areas are generally unproductive and blunt the hoe. The above proverb in its literal sense tells a story of a woman who (unlike the others) instead “catches” and farms a piece of land, which has stones, and as such, her hoe is twisted (due to constant hitting on the stones) and now is useless. Even if she sees another piece of land that has no stones and is very fertile, she cannot use this hoe on it again.

This proverb means more than what is said above. It was quoted one day in a parking lot when two taxi drivers were quarrelling. One of them abused the other that he was a useless dependent wretch who could not manage a vehicle bought by his father and given him to use as a taxi. The former continued that while he was rich and was managing well a taxi that he bought by himself, this ‘wretch’ was going round borrowing taxis to drive for a few hours when the owners were tired. Annoyed by this affront and in a way to gain his own back, the ‘wretch’ quoted the above proverb, and the masses that had gathered to abate the dispute, roared in laughter. They understood very well the proverb because most of them were taxi drivers and friends of both disputants.

An observer who was at the scene was informed that both disputants were married. While the so-termed ‘wretch’ was successful in marital life as he got two children, the other young man was not fortunate. He had got married to a girl from his village who had been a

prostitute before. They had problems in bringing forth children. It is the woman that the 'wretch' described as "stony" and barren "land", in the proverb. When people like himself would go out to "catch" a fertile piece of land (that is, a young and fertile woman), the other who pretends to be very rich, would go out for the barren land (that is, a woman who has lost her fertility through prostitution). The "hoe" in this context will mean the "penis". While the one has gone out for a soft fertile land where the hoe (penis) sunk deep without being hurt, used up or broken, the other went out for the stony and barren land and hit his hoe (penis) against it to the point that the hoe was twisted and broken. While the former who cultivated on soft and fertile land yielded young and fresh crops (children), the latter who cultivated on stony land yielded nothing. No crops (children) grew. Now that his irreplaceable hoe (penis) is used up and broken, if he went on to look for another piece of land that was fertile, he would not use his hoe well again.

From the examples, we have seen so far in this section, we would say that the proverb is very rich in beauty and we have to explore and probe deeper in order to unravel this beauty.

General conclusion on proverbs

We set out in chapters six, seven and eight to explain respectively, the meaning of the Mankon proverb, to prove whether or not the SVO structure of languages is

violated by it and whether or not this proverb has a role to play in society. From our findings and analysis, we discover that the Mankon proverb obeys the said structure. Because the proverb in general is in the declarative form, it is bound to follow this structural pattern. This does not mean that other structures do not exist; they do exist but the SVO is dominant. It is in other complex linguistic applications like the interrogative, the exclamatory and the imperative that we have other structures like the OVS, SOV, and OSV etc.

We have also observed that the characters in the variant forms of proverbs may change as we move from one society to another. Nevertheless, the structure and meaning are adamant to change, and the proverb functions variously in society to pass information across, pass a judgement, give a moral lesson, or just for the beauty of expression and weapon of wit.

That which brings variation in proverbs is that the cultures and backgrounds from which we come are different, and in order to understand them, we have to go deep into these cultures and backgrounds and study them; for the tendency is for a people to adapt linguistic usage to their cultural and environmental realities. This adaptation projects that society to sociolinguists and *ethnolinguists* who are thirsty for knowledge. What accounts for the sameness in structure and meaning (and sometimes, characters among some English and French proverbs), is the fact that language properties are

universal and an indiscrete continuum of constant borrowings and interactions amongst societies. When the proverb is borrowed, this has to be adapted to the local reality; otherwise, we will have an incongruity. An English idiomatic expression like “...as white as *snow*” will exemplify what we have been saying. Because the Mankon people have never seen *snow*, this is not to tie them down from making comparisons in the like of this idiom. They would say “... á fuyə tso mpfuə” meaning “... as white as a ghost”.

It should be admitted here that the examples and variations given in this exercise are not exclusive and watertight. Other forms are also possible if only some set principles are respected. For example, you cannot (for the sake of creativity), take part of a standardized proverb and fit in your own words and say you have quoted that proverb. A proverb can be translated, provided the characters (both mental and physical) pertain to both cultures of the first language. This is why both the English and French can conveniently say: “All that glitters is not gold” and “Tout ce qui brille n’est pas or”, but differ both in “A cat may look at a king” and “un chien regard bien un évêque” or “take a French leave” and “filer à l’anglaise”.

Chapter Nine

Ndʒì aláʔa¹ (*stories*)

9.1. Ndʒì aláʔa zɪ sâ (*Myths and Legends*)

Jick (2006: 8) states: “Myths and legends are usually etiological explaining the origins of geographical features and sociological practices...” Yes, in myths and legends, man attempts to explain the unknowable cosmogony with the aim of moralising (educating) and entertaining society. The origins of myths are in antiquity. Man is created with myths. This is why the person reciting a myth will always begin with phrases like “a long time ago”, “in the days of yore”, etc. Myths can never be scientifically proven. Its characters are usually [– human], at times [– animate]. We are dealing here with animal **fables**. This is chronologically analogous to *Creation Myths*. Needless to recall God created man (generic) last position in the scheme of things. Man woke up to find these myths already existing, so he can only explain them in the past, for he was not there at the time of their creation. Man through myths attempts to satisfy their curiosity, insatiable quest for knowledge and to understand their essence. We now only believe in myths because they are myths without that scientific backing.

On the contrary, legends could be traced at some point in history. Their characters are [+ human]. We are now dealing with the human society with its inherent

problems. The hero/heroine in legends is raised to **epic** proportions as they perform superhuman/supernatural tasks and always being helped by the gods. The principal literary style used in myths and/or legends is **allegory**².

Like we saw before, myths and legends, proverbs, riddles and jokes, rituals, song and dance, arts and crafts, etc constitute *orature* and are handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. Our bid in this section is to document this hitherto *orature* for posterity. These “verbal arts” once documented become literature and could be useful tools for development and “nation building” Jick (2006). Mankon oral forms when analysed, documented and stored maintain their originality. Later, we can compare what is with what was and see whether this rich cultural heritage is being maintained or eroded and make the necessary adjustments. Remember, the more antiquated the *orature*, the more authentic it is for we are closer our ancestors – the originators of such verbal forms.

9.1.1. *Myths*

- **Ŋwó pfo a ɣɛ ŋkoŋə** (*We die only once*). → *explains the origin of death.*

À pfu mbyi ŋwi á kaʔa bɛm bo ɲam lá bi kiʔə mpfo ɣe. Bɛ ɣən tiʔə mbyi tiʔiŋə. Nĩbɔɣi ɣi ntʃɛ mbyɛ. Nĩnaʔa bo tiʔiʔə ɣə ndzɔŋnə; nĩnaʔa a ɣə ŋwò pfó a ɣɛ ŋkoŋə. Lá

títɔ́ɔ son ɲgə ɲwò á pfo a bən ndžwemna. ɲwí a ɣuʔə adzan ʒa mbaʔa zɪ kyem àzɔɲ zen kíkəŋə. Wére lobtə aʒe sɔŋ gə ninaʔa bo títɔ́ɔ mɪ maŋnə. Wére son gə kwɪŋé a tɛm atuə ntaʔa nəɣaxə, ɲgə ɲwò wá mbaʔa a kʰə nɪ tsâ mbyì ɲgé mbuʔu mu a mɪ tɣwiti ɲkɪŋ yɛ. Nɪnaʔa a bɔ ɲgen yi ndà-nda. Títɔ́ɔ lentə ninaʔa ɲgwe yi, ɲgə ninaʔa a mɪ tɪ ɲâni ɣɪ ɪnu tɣi zɪ yen tsâ ɲgé yɛ. Wére yen ndʒɛ ɲgɔ́ɔ ʒɪ ntsí mpfurə, ɲgə zɪ mɪ mɛtə lí nàŋtə tsâ ɣɛ buʔə kwen-wa. ɲgɔ́ɔ ʒa ɲwiʔiti, ntamtə atúə wɛɛ. Wére ɣə zɪ vukə tiʔi ndzuʔu àdzan ʒá mbaʔa ninaʔa a buʔu nə kwen wa son gə: ɲwò á pfo a ɣɛ kon-ooo! Lɔ́ɣɪ nə ndžwi wá ɲwò-tsum bɔ́ɔ ɲam-tsum pfo bo ɣɛ ɲkonə.

(In days of yore when God created the universe, no persons and animals were ever dying. Consequently, these beings lived for too long causing a scare in the world. The chameleon and the toad were quarrelling about this: the chameleon holding the view that when one dies one does not come to life again, and the toad had a contrary view. God, confused by these contrary opinions, devised a trick to settle both contestants. He placed a big talking drum on a far-off hill and engaged both in a race. The first to reach the drum will announce his view. While the chameleon started the race slowly in the manner of chameleons, the toad looked at the way he was walking and laughed. The toad felt he would later start his race and would easily

jump past the lazy chameleon. After finally starting the race, he came across termites (white ants) and started eating them. He felt that after he must have finished eating the tasty termites, he would sprint past the chameleon to deliver his message. He was only surprised to hear the drumbeat of the chameleon announcing, "If we die, we depart from this world forever". From thence, all living things have only a single life.)

⇒ What is the moral here: sloth, greed, self-centredness, etc?

- N̄ɪvwó fɪɣə (*Why death is blind*). → explains why death behaves the way it does today.

À ɲkfu mbyi ɲwo ɣá dvuŋə tɛʔɛ ɲkan mbɔŋ pfo. ɲkfù n̄ɪvwó ɲwò kúʔu la, ɲwì, á tsayɪ n̄ɪvwó a n̄ ɣɛ ndɔɣə yɛ. ɲwì, á yen tsayɪ n̄ɪwɔ n̄ ɣɛ ndɔɣə tanɲan (wu) tsé wa a n̄ ɲwò ɲkáɓè. N̄ɪvwó yen tànɲan wé bo ɲgwɛɣɪ zì bɪ mibɪrɪ n̄ɪvwó, n̄ɪvwó bən ɲgɛ sonɲə mbo ɲwì ɲgə zɪ ɣɛ ɲkɪʔə tànɲan wé zɛ. ɲwì fɔmabvúɪ wa a zì n̄ nu tsùm, á zì ɲgə bɪ mibɪrɪ n̄ɪvwó. Ntón ɲɛɛ lwi a ɲye n̄ɪvwó, ɲɛɛ tiʔi ɲgɪ n̄ɪvwó fɪɣə. Né ànu zá mbaʔa n̄ɪvwó fɪɣɪ n̄, n̄ yinɲə mbyi wen n̄ tiʔə mɔɓɪrɪ ɪdiʔi n̄ tʃwa ndvuŋ ɲwo, manɲhə; manɲyé, mbaɲnɪ; kɛ ɲwo-ɲkáɓɪ, ɲwò-fúm; n̄ lɔɣə ɲgɛ ɲga a mbô ɲwìə.

[In the past, all men (generic) lived up to old age before dying. When one's time was up, God despatched His emissary – Death – to bring them along. This was the case of one rich old man. When Death went there, this rich old man and his family did not want him to die, so bribed Death. Death went back and told God he never met the old man. The omniscient God knew Death had lied and was very angry, so blinded Death. This is why when blind Death comes to earth, he gropes and whoever: the old or young, woman or man, rich or poor, he takes along.]

⇒ Does this myth explain the origin of corruption, moral ineptitude and decadence in our society today?

9.1.2. *Legends*

- Ngòʔo atfwirə mɔʔo (*A heap of rocks*). → explains a natural geographical feature

Adíʔə tse tʃɛ mu màŋkon bɛ̃ tɔŋə nɛ̃ ngòʔo atfwirə mɔʔo ɣé. Màŋkuŋ laʔa ngə a ɣɛ̃ bɛ̃ ŋkfù–ntso, atomə fɪlam zə mɔʔə a farɪsɪ ngàŋ fɪlam màŋkon ndzɔŋ ntamə wa tɪtəʔə adíʔi winè. Nwò–abú màŋkon wá bɛ̃ tɔŋə nɛ̃ Awasom–tambú, a ɣam nɪɣam nə abú mbəŋ màŋkon ben(ə) aŋe ngòʔo atfwiri a diʔə mɔʔo ɣe. Àtóm za yen tiʔi fumsɪ. Nwò–abú wǎ sóŋ gə bo lɔ ngyiŋə la ngòʔo kɪʔə adíʔi mawa tʃɛ, ɪ tiʔi bə ndo ɣe wu le. Wére son gə

a mɪ bɛ ɲàŋ ɸɪlamə maŋkon-tsá. Bó tʃuʔu muɣə a ɲe ɲɔ̀ʔ tsá. ɲwò-abú màŋkuŋə á fuə ɣaŋɪ ndi kɔʔ a ɸɪmabvurə mbébɪ nɪkaŋ mbəŋ-ɸɪwɛ tʃwɪnɪ ɸɔɣə muɣɪ wɪŋə. Àtóm za kʰəkə. ɲwò-abú màŋkon wá bən ɲgyen gə zɪ bəŋ màŋkon bá, lá ndɪɣnɪ nɪɣam nə abú na. Né ànu zá mbaʔa ɲɔ̀ʔ tsá (ɪ) tsi nɪ wu yen kuʔu sɪŋə lá.

(There is a place in Mankon known as “a heap of stones”. The story goes that in the years of war a certain warring village cornered Mankon warriors at this place. A Mankon magician pronounced some magical words and transformed the warriors into a heap of rocks. The attacking force came up to the place and was confused what must have become of the soldiers they were after. Their magician came and said there were no rocks at the place at the time they were fighting and that if rocks have suddenly cropped up there, these should be the Mankon warriors-turned rocks. They then set fire on the rocks. The Mankon magician came out of the rocks, transformed into a swallow and flew heaven-bound and burst open the heavens and a torrential rain with hailstones poured and quenched the blazing fire, consequently chasing away the foreign attackers. The Mankon magician returned and wanted to turn back his rock-soldiers to humans but unfortunately forgot the magical words. This is why the rock-soldiers are there to date.)

⇒ Does this legend explain man's limitation and tragedy?

- Àwasom–tambúə (*A Mankon war legend; and great magician*)

* In Mankon, 'àbú(ə)' = magic; 'tàn'[tə] = father, elder, expert , etc. So, **tàmbúə** = great magician. (Note the effect of assimilation on [n] in 'tan–' that becomes [m] in the environment of [b] in 'tàmbúə').

À ɲkfu ntsa–mbyi mbɔɲə maɲkuɲ ɲgɛ ntsɔ̌, tàn Awasom–tambú a wôtə ɲwò fɪlam tsum a ntɔ̌ɔ̌ fɪ maɲkuɲə. Wére tam ɪmaʔa mi ɲwo fɪlam tsum á tsa wuə. Bé wére zɛ a ɲe àbú a zi ɲgə ò mɪ ɲɛ àfon tsɔ̌ kɪʔɪ kwen, wére tsayə ɣo taʔa bàɣə. Bèm bá wére zarɪ nɪ ɲgə bɪ ɲɛ kwen da, wére tiʔi ɲgen nɪ bô, fɪ fɔɣə wa wére tiʔi ɲgen nɪ bô àfon–tso (ɣe). Bó mɪ maʔa/tumə fɪlam bən kwén tɛʔə bɪtsumə . À bɛ ɲguʔu tsere màɲkuɲ máʔanə fɪlam bo tɪbaʔa. Mbɔɲə bɪ ɲgɛ, tàn Awasom á ɣɪ abuwə ɲɛ ntɔ̌ɔ̌ ndzen gə tàntso wu mɔ̌ɔ̌ wá bɪ tɔɲə nɪ Takɪkɔ̌rɪ a mɪ ɲɛ kɪʔɪ kwɛ. Wére son wuə bo la wére lɪʔə ɣe. Wére fɛm ntəm ɣi ɲgə ɲgaɲ–tsò mɪ ɲɛ nə, zɪ tsò àdzɔɲə aláʔa zɪ tʃe ndâ lé. Wére zɔɲ nə atɪɲə atúə. Nwò tsumə ɲɛ kwen a pfo tɛʔe tan Takɪkɔ̌rɪ àfon–tso.

(In the days of war before the Mankon people went into war, Pa Awasom–tambú gathered all the soldiers at their Fo's palace. He stood astride and all the

soldiers passed between his legs. Those he saw (through his magic) will not come back alive; he placed them on one side. Those that would not die at war were blessed by the Fo and Awasom took them to battle. Once, the Mankon people were at war with the Balis. As usual, Pa Awasom did his magic and saw that one great warrior Pa Takikori would die in battle if he were taken afield. Consequently, he was warned but he beat his chest in pride and said that he as a great warrior could not stay behind when men were going for battle. He, however, followed the troop against the wish of others. Every other soldier came back home safe Pa Takikori that was killed in battle.)

⇒ Does this legend explain man's bravado and his being impervious to counsels?

- Kèṁ(ə) (*A rift valley*)

Kèṁ tsé a tʃɛ mu mànkon mbé adiʔi³ za mbaʔa kwiʔfɔ̃ maŋkuŋə á kə zwiʔi ŋgaŋə àfanɪ wuə. Kwíʔfɔ̃ á ɣə ndɔɣə ŋwò afanɪ, ntémə ntsu kèṁ we ɪsáʔatɪ mbɔŋ tiŋə wɛɛ a mu kèṁ wiŋə. À lón be ndʒwi tsɛɛ kwiʔfɔ̃ á ɣə zɪ tiŋə ŋwò afanɪ wu mɔʔɔ, wɛɛ tʃwa kwiʔfɔ̃ bó zɪ kanə mu kèṁ wiŋə. Lɔŋnə ndʒwí wa ànuə ndʒwíʔɪ bɛ mu kèṁ wiŋə á miə.

(There is a certain rift valley in Mankon where those who committed grievous village (state) crimes were killed (by pushing them into the deep dark hole). The kwi'fo (sacred juju) would take the culprit and stand at the mouth of this valley, pronounce a few words of curse before pushing them down the deep hole. One day the kwi'fo was about to push a culprit down when the latter clutched at the kwi'fo and both went down the precipice. This put an end to such killings.)

⇒ Is this legend a lampoon on a debilitating justice system?

9.2. A Joke: hábá Nto'munwi → *humour and entertainment*

Nto'munwi: (*nfómə ganakɔ́ɔ*) ò lén kawo wo kuɲə mu
 ʃom me ɲkfuɾɪ ntʃwì zan ɲgé ke.

(Beating the 'ganakɔ́ɔ' – Bororo herdsman)

You dare allow your cows to destroy my
 maize farm?

Ganakɔ́ɔ : hábá bábá, hábá.

Enough father, enough. I beg you, I'm
 sorry.

Nto'munwi: É be. ɲgé ma bâɲɪ. Mà sɪ tiʔi mbéɲə abarə
 atu mɪdzɪ man. Káwo wo dzɪ mɪdzɪ man,
 ma ɣə ma bitə o ɣə ma bâɲɪ. (*ɲkwíʔi ʃomə
 yi nə⁴ adaʔa*).

Is that? Therefore, I'm now mad! I'm now
mad in asking about
my crops that your cows have destroyed?
(*Beats him even harder.*)

Ganakɔɔ: (*Pleading with hands raised*) **Á musukoʔo, bá bá! A musukoʔo!**

I'm very sorry father, very sorry.

Nto'munwi: **ɔɔ! Ngé a mɛ shibɛ kuʔu wɔɔ. Á zala, a wa a mɛ fibɛ kuʔu wɔɔ sɛ́hɛ la.**

Aah, that we're going to have it hot today?
That's right there we go...

- This is a language mix-up: Nto'munwi understood 'há bá' to mean 'àbaré' – a mad person; and 'musuko'o' to mean 'mɛ fibɛ kuʔu(-ə)' – a difficult situation.

9.3. **Ìkom ndi muə** (*The lullaby*) → *to calm babies*.

i. **Nàmàṅkáré kɔʔɔ tɛ́sɔ́ṅ, tɔ́ṅtè ndì yàn ngá nɛ mē.**

Nàmàṅkáré kɔʔɔ tɛ́sɔ́ṅ, tɔ́ṅtè ndì yàn ngá nɛ mē.

Kùbè kùbè, kùb tɛ́áʔə kùb.

Kùbè kùbè, kùb tɛ́áʔə kùb.

(The horse is climbing the Bamenda Station hill making the onomatopoeic noise 'kùbè, kùbè, kùb tɛ́áʔə kùb'). It should be noted that the nanny sings this song to her baby while the latter is on her laps and she imitates the galloping horse to the delight of her baby.

- ii. Nâ kúúú.., nâ kú mbôôô; màngyé ntɔ́ʔ tɛ́nɛ́ ɣé àkòʔ
fɛ́nɛ́njì zɔ́ɣè nárè wè ndzùm: náré, náré, náré...

(...when the queen is going to the latrine, flies follow her...) The nanny and the baby connect hands at ‘nâ kú...mbôôô’, and rub them very fast when they are singing ‘náré, náré...’

- iii. Tàbóóó é ê

Tàbó sán é ê

Tàbó tàkàʔà é ê

Nkfúré àɣàmè ntɣwì é ê

Tàbóóó é ê

Etc.

- iv. (Sung mostly to ward off birds and animals from the farm)

Kàɲ á bé bé nɛ́vwó lé, tsɔ́ʔ á bé bé nɛ́vwó lé

Màɲkùɲ tɛ́ kfúré màndzû mà ɣé ɲé lé

Wááá, wá kɛ́sára wááá...

(The squirrel is a threat to our farms, so too is the bush-fowl; when Mankon people shall be eating their groundnuts, what shall I be doing?

So, go away weaverbird, go away...)

Notes

- 1 /ndʒi aláʔa/ [**ndʒɛ́láʔa**] (The individual etymological words mean ‘the voice’ + ‘the people’ in that order). Therefore, the construct means literally ‘the voice of the people’ = *stories*.
- 2 This is a literary narrative with both surface and implied meanings whose main aim is didacticism.
- 3 This word (and others that have this –i ending) when used in citation form is **àdiʔé**.
- 4 The word normally is **ní**, but becomes **nó** here because of the influence of the following vowel [a].

A) Bɛfo bi Manɔkunɔ (The Fɔs of Mankon)

- 1) **Ndemagha'a I**: Founder of Mankon; led the people from Sa'anyom.
- 2) **Ndemagha'a II**: Ruled around Tang, War and Wiya in Donga Mantung Division.
- 3) **Ndemaha'a III**: Led the people to Bamukumbit, Babadjou and Dschang.
(*alias Minwitingori*)
- 4) **Tako'matsi I**
- 5) **Ndemagha'a IV**
- 6) **Tako'matsi II**: } All ruled between Babadjou and Dschang.
- 7) **Ndemagha'a V**: Led the people to Nwe (Bangwa) in Fontem; died of 'tátû'.
- 8) **Tangwaani**: Led the people to Tarinkon (Widikum).
- 9) **Ndemagha'a VI** (*alias Mbangnizhi*): Ruled in Tarinkon.
- 10) **Tsemagha'a I**: Founder of Ala'nkyi.
- 11) **Ndemagha'a VII**
- 12) **Tsemagha'a II**
- 13) **Ndefru I**
- 14) **Ndemagha'a VIII**
- 15) **Ndefru II** } All lived, died and were buried at Ala'nkyi.

- 16) **Angwa'fo I**: Founder of Fumnju'u; buried at Ala'ankyi.
- 17) **Fomukong**: Led the people to Fozan (the present site of the palace; ruled 1799–1866.)
- 18) **Angwa'fo II**: He ruled 1866–1920; a great warrior; fought the wars against Zintgraff; reigned during the German and British rules.
- 19) **Ndefru III**: Ruled 1920–1959; great administrator and developer.
- 20) **Angwa'fo III**: Became *Fo* in 1959---; Politician, Agronomist and developer.

B) ʔtsê (Clans)

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| 1) Àláʔakuma | 11) Mànde |
| 2) Àláʔatəkɔɔ | 12) Mándôm |
| 3) Àláʔaŋkyi | 13) Màsɔɔ |
| 4) Bèkorə | 14) Màtsɔm |
| 5) Bènaŋə | 15) Mbètû |
| 6) B̃kɔ́m | 16) Ndzòŋ |
| 7) Bòmbi–aŋerɪŋgum | 17) Ngúlon |
| 8) Bòmbi–ndesɪɪ | 18) Ntsûalam |
| 9) Màkufwiri | 19) Ntɔʔɔfi |
| 10) Màmbuʔu | |

C) M̄ikfu(ə) (*Quarters*)

1– Akfungben	19– Masoh
2– Akohkikang	20– Mbingfibie
3– Akumlam	21– Mulang
4– Ala'chu* ¹	22– Musang
5– Ala'frumbi	23– Muwatsoh
6– Ala'kuma	24– Ndzumambeuah
7– Ala'mandom	25– Ngomgham
8– Ala'mankon	26– Ngulong
9– Ala'matu	27– Nitop I & II
10– Ala'nkyi	28– Nta'mafe
11– Ala'takoh	29– Nta'mambuh
12– Ala'tening	30– Nta'mbeng* ²
13– Asongkah	31– Nta'mulvung
14– Azire	32– Nta'ngu
15– Bagmandey	33– Nta'ngub
16– Bagbanong	34– Nta'nkah
17– Fumju'u	35– Nta'titon
18– Kipfun	36– Ntarinkon
	37– Ntingkag

'àláʔa' when used singly, means 'the land, the people or the *Fondom*'. But when used as a prefix, the word means 'the land of...' e.g. **Alaʔnkyi(-ɛ)** = 'the land of -**ŋkyi(-ɛ)** (water); **Ala'mankon** = 'the land of the Mankon people' [Needless to recall the Mankon people settled here after their migration from Widikum and their palace was at Ala'nkyi(-ɛ)]; **Ala'kuma** = 'the land of the people of Akuma'; etc.

*2: '**ntáʔa**' = 'the hill of...' e.g. **Nta'mbeng** = 'the hill of -**mbə̀ŋ(ə)** (rain); **Nta'ngub** = 'the hill of -**ŋgúb(ə)** (fowls; cf 1:2)

D) M̃kwaʔanə (*Numbers*)

mòʔ	1
bâ	2
táre	3
kwâ	4
tân	5
ntúgə	6
sàmbâ	7
ñf̃ə	8
ñbvúʔə	9
ñxúm	10
ñxúm tsòb mɔʔ	11
ñxúm tsòb bâ	12
m̃xúm (mi) m̃m bâ	20
m̃xúm (mi) m̃n tarə	30
m̃xúm (mi) ñi kwa	40
m̃xúm (mi) m̃ntân / tón	50
m̃xúm (mi) ntugə	60
m̃xúm (mi) sambâ	70
m̃xúm (mi) ñf̃ən	80
m̃xúm (mi) ñbvú'ə	90
(táʔa) ŋkʰi	100
(táʔa) ŋkʰi ñi mɔʔ, bâ, etc	101, 102, etc

E) Ñkáb(ə) (*Money – FCFA*)

ànəni	= 5f
àtóre	= 10f
àbat̃i	= 25f

m̃yúm tân	= 50f
(táʔa) ŋkʰɿ	= 100f
ŋkʰɿ bâ	= 200f

.....

.....

(táʔa) ntʃùʔu	= 1,000f
ntʃùʔu bâ	= 2,000f

.....

.....

ntʃùʔu ñyúm	= 10,000f
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.....

.....

àbə ŋkáb(ə) (a bag of money	= 100,000f)
ʔbə(-an) (tsí) bâ (2 bags of money	= 200,000f)

.....

.....

ŋkám ŋkab(ə) (countless money	= 1,000,000f)
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F) ɲòm(ə) (*Time*)

tàndʒwi(ə)	= morning / dawn
nt̃ɿɲ ɲôm(ə)	= midday
ndzəɲ ɲôm(ə)	= afternoon
ŋkwènfon (ŋkwen-afon)	= evening
nt̃ɿɲ-tfúʔu(-ə)	= midnight
ntɔ̃ŋə-akʰiə	= cock crow
ɲôm-ndʒwí(ə)	= before dawn
ndʒwí(-ɛ)	= a day
ʔzô¹	= yesterday/ tomorrow

ngàb(ə)	= a week
ngàb(ə) ²	= last week/ next week
sàŋ(ə)	= a month/moon
àlôm(ə)	= a year
àlôm(ə) ³	= last year/ next year

G) Ndɔwí mànkunə (*Days of the week in Mankon*)

Mbĩŋinə	→ the beginning i.e. the first day.
Zɛŋkáʔanə	→ ndɔwí* aláʔa (public holiday in Mankon).
Mâmítan	→ big market day.
Zɛdzon(ə)	
Zàkɔb(ə)	
Mbígnđôm(ə)	
Zɛŋkon	
Sámnnə	→ mĩŋa mĩ ndɔwí* aláʔà [small public holiday in Mankon and the market day at Sàmni+(mandzaʔa)]
	*([ndɔwɛláʔà]; cf 7.2.3.)

H) Bĩsanə (*Months / Seasons*)

- 1) Mbĩŋinəlôm(ə) (beginning of the year) : January
- 2) Abùb(ə) (very hot period / season) : February
- 3) Ntsúbmbəŋ(ə) (beginning of the rainy season): March
- 4) Mbímídzĩ(ə) (planting season) : April
- 5) Azù(ə) : May
- 6) Mbúʔunəlôm(ə) (mid-year) : June
- 7) Mĩyam(ə) (period of heavy rains) : July
- 8) Fúʔumídzĩ(ə) (harvesting season) : August

- 9) **Abùmɪntáʔa** (period of strong winds) : September
 10) **Ndzɪŋə-dzɪŋə** (sporadic rains) : October
 11) **Ŋwárɛsɛn** : November
 12) **Alôm(ə)** (the dry season) : December

NB: a) **ŋgàb ɪ nɪ ndʒwi tsi nɪfɛ̃** (A week: **ŋgab(ə)** = 8 days)
 b) (**Táʔa**) **alôm á nɪ bɪsɔŋ tsɔb bâ** (A year: **àlôm(ə)** = 12 months / seasons)

J) Mɪdzɪ(ə) (*Food items*)

- àkúʔu(ə)** colocasia
àmbô banana
àzúʔə yam (of various kinds: yellow, white, sweet, etc)
fɪkón bean of various kinds
fɪtúʔu(ə) potato
kásara (-la) cassava.
màfɛ-ŋkon sweet potato
màkábə cocoyam
mándzu(ə) groundnuts
ntɔwɪ(-ɛ) (corn / maize; used mainly to cook **àbɛ̃** (*fufu*).
Ndzu(ə) bambara groundnuts
nɪbɔʔɔ pumpkin
nɪŋɔm(ə) plantain
ŋgvù(ə) local carrot

K) Ndză (Vegetables)

àntwéré	colocasia flower
àjéré	aubergine
àtəb(ə)	colocasia leaves
fī	green
ṽwági(-ə)	cowpeas
ṽwumə	
ṽyen	bitter leaves
màŋkəŋəbɔŋ(ə)	
mṽnɪsɔŋnə	young elephant stalk
ndză-ŋkaŋ(ə)	huckleberry
ŋgṽʔé	pistachio (nut)
wàtalib(ə) (loan)	water lily

K) ṽti(ə) (Trees / plants; some adapted from MALAT)

àfəŋəfŋə		fṽnyáʔa	
àkakwén		fùgə	
àlomanɪkɪŋé		ṽsa	
àŋgwafa (loan)	guava	ṽséɪn	
àŋkwəbɪnə	plum	ṽfugə	
àwíə		ṽwâ	
bàʔa		ṽyen	
bàŋə		lámsə	orange
bṽ	cam wood	lwúŋə	
byâ (loan)	avocado / pear	màmbəʔnə	
		màŋgorə (loan)	mango

mbàŋə	palm	ŋkǎmbáŋə	
mbǎ́é		ŋkǎŋkaʔa	elephant stalk
mbvùə	umbrella	ŋkàŋə	dracaena
ndòbə		ŋkòŋə	
nǎ́bíé	cola nut	támâtséʔe	
nǎ́bɪŋbyí(-é)		tsémnəmbvurə	
nǎ́tǎŋə	raffia	wùmə	
ntàŋŋə		zágəzəgə	
ntǎ́ndémə			
ntsàmə			

L) Bǎ́sǎ́ŋ(ə) (*Birds*)

Àkabəŋ(ə)	kite	kfùŋ-kfūŋ(ə)	
àkaŋâ		mǎ́nɪdzáŋŋə	martins
àntsówɛ	clock bird	ŋgúb(ə)	fowl
àtalôm(ə)	dove	ŋgúʔə	crane
búyɪrɪ fɪkūŋə		sára(kɪgye)	weaver bird
fɪfâ	long tail	tsóʔə	bush fowl
ýáŋŋə	swallow	wàrə	hawk
kfùŋ(ə)	owl		

M) ʔbóm bɪ ɪdzum(ə) (*Insects*)

àkəŋɔŋə	worm	mánɣkɔfɛ	wasp
àŋkyɛ́nə	cricket	mbvùŋə	grasshopper
fɪnɪfuʔnə	cockroach/beetle	mbyèn	grub
fɪnɪndʒɛ	fly	ndzèm(ə)	moth
ʔɪɪ(ə)	soldier ants	nɪbɔŋə	black ants
ʔnwú(ə)	bee	ŋgɔʔ	termite
ʔsɛʔɛ	white ants	tàbáʔaŋam(ə)	butterfly

N) Mɪŋam(ə) (*Animals*)

1. Nàm-ndâ (*tame*)

búsə(-ɪ)	(loan)	pussy (cat)
kàpfuŋam(ə)		pig
káwǒ	(loan)	cow
mbyí-ndzɪ(ə)		sheep

mbyí-ndɔŋ(ə)		goat
mbɔʔ-mbáb(ə)		rabbit
ŋàm-mɪ́karə		
(ŋàmaŋkáre)		horse
ŋgúb(ə)		fowl
ŋgvó		dog

2. ŋàm mɪbaʔa (*wild*)

àfón		leopard / lion
àkəŋkɔŋə		lizard
àŋgábə		antelope
àŋgwábaʔa		hyena
àŋkábaŋ(ə)		wolf
àtalém(ə)		bat
àtəsəm(ə)		
ɪfwì(ə)		hare
fú(ə)		rat
ʔsén		elephant

kàŋə		squirrel
màŋkəm(ə)		bush baby
mbábndôm(ə)		rat mole
nɪmáŋ(ə)		wild cat
ŋjíbne		cutting grass
ŋô		snake
ŋkɛ		monkey
tsɔʔ		bush fowl
tɔʔrə	(tree)	squirrel
vùghə		small bat

<u>Name</u>	<u>Pronunciation</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Pronunciation</u>
Abegley	[àbəgrə]	Anye	[àɲɛ]
Abong*	[àbɔŋə]	Asaah	[àsáʔa]
Aborungong	[àbɔrɪŋgɔŋə]	Asamuwah	[àsáʔamɪwâ]
Abumuntah	[àbumɪntáʔa]	Asandom	[àséndom(ə)]
Achamukong	[àtʃamɪkɔŋə]	Asanga	[àsəŋə]
Achu	[àtsuə]	Asangong	[àsáʔəŋgɔŋ(ə)]
Achundoh	[àtsuʔndɔʔɔ]	Asombangnu	[àsɔŋmbanɪ]
Ade	[àdé]	Asongwe	[àsɔŋgwe]
Adesoh	[àdésuʔu]	Asoo	[àsɔ]
Aghanwi*	[àɣânwi]	Atangcho	[átáŋtsɔ]
Akam	[àkamə]	Atangha	[átáŋə]
Akenji	[àkɪŋndʒɪ]	Ateh	[atɛʔɛ]
Akobatso	[àkobətsɔʔɔ]	Atia	[àtiə]
Akombo	[àkɔmbɔ]	Atonji	[àtɔŋdʒɪ]
Akow	[àkɔ]	Atsoa	[àtsɔʔə]
Akum	[àkum]	Atumnkoh	[atumnkɔʔɔ]
Akuma	[àkumə]	Avontom	[àvɔntóm]
Akumawah	[àkúməwəʔa]	Awah*	[àwəʔa]
Akumchi	[àkumtsɪ]	Awambeng	[àwâmbəŋ]
Akwa	[àkwa]	Awasum	[àwâsom]
Akwen	[àkwen]	Awondo	[àwundo]
Alega	[àlɛɣə]	Ayah	[àyǎ]
Aliah	[àliʔə]	Ayeah	[àyéʔə]
Amah	[àmáʔa]	Aza	[àzá]
Amahbo	[àmáʔabɔ]	Azah	[àzaʔa]
Amahmuzam	[àmáʔamɪzam]	Azhia	[àʒiə]
Amahngoh	[àmaʔəŋgɔʔɔ]	Azhinwi*	[àʒinwi]
Amancho	[àmaʔantsɔ]	Azongha	[àzɔŋə]
Ambah	[àmbáʔa]	Azuah	[àzuʔə]
Ambe (Bafut origin)	[àmbé]	Beghehne	[bɪɣɪʔinɪ]
Angu	[àŋgúʔu]	Bih	[bɪ]
Angu'fo	[àŋgúʔufɔ]	Bihnwi	[bínwi]
Angwa'fo	[ŋgwáʔafɔ]	Bongam	[bèŋgámə]

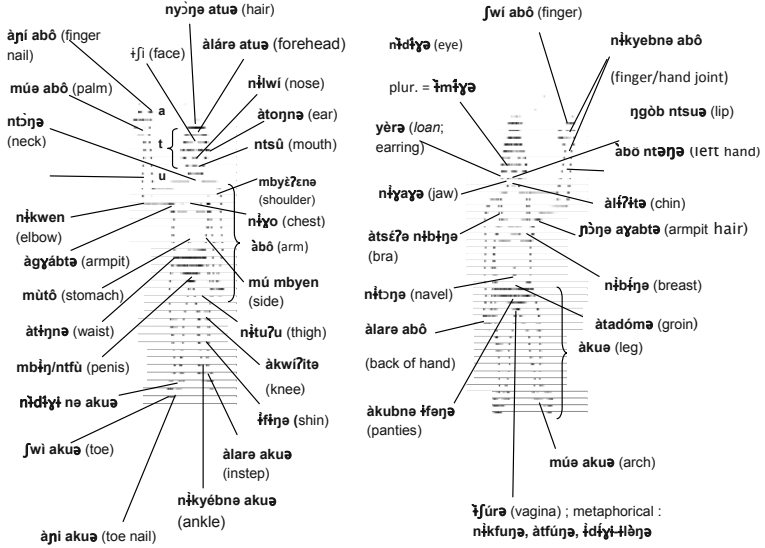
Busong	[bʊ́són]	Forbudzong	[ɪ́fbʊ́dzonə]
Buteh	[bʊ́tɛ́ʔɛ]	Forcob	[ɪ́fbakɔ́bə]
Buzhi	[bʊ́ʒí]	Forghang	[ɪ́fɔ́ŋgánə]
Che (Tsey)	[tsé]	Formambuh (Bafut origin)	[ɪ́fmambuʔə]
Chendi	[tséndi]	Formuluh	[ɪ́fmɪluʔu]
Chenjo	[tséndzô]	Fornidore	[ɪ́fɔ́nɪdore]
Chi	[tsí]	Fornkap	[ɪ́fɔ́ŋkábə]
Chibayere	[tsibayerə]	Fornkeuh	[ɪ́fɔ́ŋkʰíʔə]
Chibukom	[tsibikómə]	Fortebui (Batibo origin)	[ɪ́ftə́bi-(ə)]
China	[tsína]	Forti	[ɪ́fɔ́ti-(ə)]
Chingang	[tsingán]	Fortisha	[ɪ́ftɪ́ʃâ]
Cho	[tʃəʔə]	Fortoh	[ɪ́ftɔ́ʔə]
Chumbong	[tsúʔumbɔ́ŋə]	Fortom	[ɪ́ftɔ́mə]
Chungong	[tsúʔungɔ́ŋə]	Fowaju	[ɪ́fwaju]
Fobuwe	[ɪ́fbɪwe]	Fru*	[fúru]
Fofang	[ɪ́fɔ́fán]	Frumbi	[fúrumbyi]
Fokumbare	[ɪ́fkɪ́mbare]	Frunwi*	[fúrunwi]
Fombang	[ɪ́fbánə]	Fusi (Bafut origin)	[fúse]
Fombenu	[ɪ́fbɪnú]	Ghamoteh	[ɣè́mòtə]
Fomingom	[ɪ́fɔ́mɪ́ŋɔ́m]	Ghasuh	[ŋgàsú]
Fomukong	[ɪ́fɔ́mɪ́kɔ́ŋ]	Khien	[kɪ́yɪ́ŋə]
Fomunu	[ɪ́fɔ́mɪnu]	Kika	[kíkâ]
Fon	[ɪ́fɔ́n]	Konje	[kòndzen]
Fonchingong	[ɪ́fɔ́ntʃɛ́ŋɔ́ŋə]	Kuko	[kíku]
Fondzong	[ɪ́fbʊ́dzonə]	Kumcho	[ŋkúmntsɔ́]
Fongang	[ɪ́fɔ́ŋgánə]	Labah	[àlábə]
Fongu	[ɪ́fɔ́ŋguʔu]	Laban	[àlábə́n]
Fonkwa	[ɪ́fɔ́kwaʔa]	Laboeru	[àlábə́rə]
Fontah	[ɪ́fɔ́ntáʔa]	Lawom	[àláwa]
Fontawah	[ɪ́fɔ́tawáʔa]	Lobati	[lɔ́btə]
Fonteh	[ɪ́fɔ́ntɛ́ʔɛ]	Lum	[lùm]
Fontoh	[ɪ́fɔ́ntɔ́ʔ]	Mafo	[máfɔ́]
Fontso	[ɪ́fɔ́ntsɔ́]	Malozen*	[málozen]
Forba	[ɪ́fbáʔa]	Malufa (Bafut origin)	[mɪ́luʔufá]
Forbanjong	[ɪ́fbə́ndzɔ́ŋə]	Mambo	[mámbo]

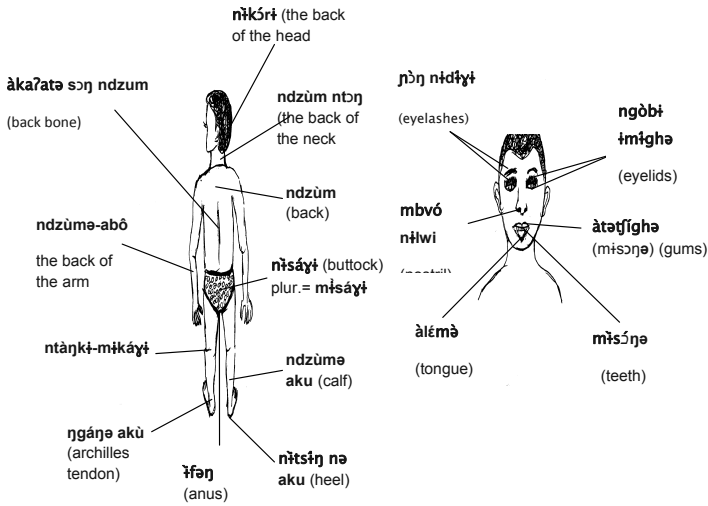
Mandzu	[mándzú]	Ndingwan	[ndìŋgwən]
Mangyie	[mā-ŋgyé]	Ndisah	[ndisáʔa]
Manjong	[màndzɔŋə]	Nditah	[nditən]
Mankah	[mā-ŋkaʔa]	Ndoh	[ndóʔɔ]
Mankefor	[mən̄kʰə-fɔ (ɣe)]	Ndzem	[ndzēmə]
Mantohbang	[mèntɔʔɔbaŋ(ə)]	Ndzo	[ndzò]
Mbah	[mbáʔa]	Ndzoke	[ndzókə]
Mbaniko	[bánə- akò]	Neh	[nê]
Mbendzo	[bèn-ndzò]	Nehsoh	[nêsoʔo]
Mbuh	[mbúʔə]	Ngang	[ŋgàŋə]
Mishimbo	[mìʃimbò]	Nganya	[ŋgàna]
Monikang	[món-n̄kaŋ(ə)]	Ngohmanji (Bafut origin)	[ŋgɔʔɔ-mandʒi]
Moti	[mòtə]	Ngu	[ŋgúʔu]
Muakoh*	[mù-akɔʔɔ]	Nguhfor	[ŋgúʔu-fɔ]
Muangu	[mù-angúʔu]	Ngum	[ŋgùm]
Mubuifor	[mù-bɪfɔ(ɣé)]	Ngum-malieh	[ŋgùməliʔə]
Muchi	[mú-tsi]	Nguti	[ŋgótɪ]
Muforlum	[mùfɔlumə]	Ngwa	[ŋgwáʔa]
Muma	[mɪ-má]	Ngwantsang	[ŋgwáʔa-ntsəŋə]
Mundzum	[mùndzúmə]	Ngwasa	[ŋgwásɪ]
Mungong	[mùŋgɔŋə]	Ngwashi (Bafut origin)	[ŋgwàsɪ]
Munwi	[mù-ŋwiə][mɪnwɪ]	Ngwatom (Bafut origin)	[ŋgwà-atóm]
Musongong	[mɪsɔŋgɔŋə]	Ngwoegley	[ŋgwèghɪ - ìlè]
Nanga	[nèŋgá]	Ningo	[níŋgo]
Nchifor	[ntʃɪ-fɔ]	Nji	[ndʒɪ]
Nchinda	[ntsɪŋ-ndá]	Njilele	[njɔʔɔ-lɛrə]
Nchotindari	[ntsótɪndáre]	Njingang	[njɔʔɔ-ŋgəŋə]
Nchotu	[ntsòʔətúə]	Njinwi	[njɔʔɔ-nwi]
Ndamanji (Bafut origin)	[ndáməndʒi]	Nju	[ndzú]
Ndeh	[ndɪʔɪ]	Njuke	[ndzúke]
Ndehfru	[ndɪʔɪ-furu]	Nka'nwi*	[ŋkáʔ-nwi]
Ndenge	[ndènə]	Nkimbeng	[ŋkyɪ-mbən(ə)]
Ndi	[ndiə]	Nkwenti	[ŋkwèntə]
Ndifombi	[ndifombiə]	Nkyangte	[ŋkyàŋtə]
Ndifor	[ndifɔ (ɣé)]	Nsoh	[ɪsuʔə]

Nsufor	[ɲsuʔəfɔ]	Tamatu	[tàmâ-atúə]
Ntohmbang	[ntɔʔɔmamban]	Tamukom	[tən-mɪkɔm]
Ntohzing	[ntɔʔɔzɪŋ]	Tamukong	[tən-mɪkɔŋ]
Ntomnifor	[ntɔmfɔ]	Tandakwah	[tən-ndákwaʔa]
Ntsah*	[ntsáʔa]	Tangie	[tən-ŋgyé]
Ntsambinifor	[ntsàmbinifon]	Tangienyoh	[tən-ŋgyényɔʔɔ]
Ntsamukong	[ntsàmɪkɔŋ]	Tanikfu	[tən-nɪkfu]
Ntsang	[ntsán]	Tanipfum	[tən-nɪkfun]
Ntsazob	[ntsáʔazɔb]	Taniswim	[tən-nɪfwim]
Ntseawah /Ncheawah	[ntséʔɛ-awaʔa]	Tankem	[tən-ŋkəm]
Ntseh /Nche	[ntséʔɛ]	Tanteh	[tən-ntéʔɛ]
Ntsunki	[ntsú-ŋkyi(ɛ)]	Tatse	[tən-atsé(ɣe)]
Ntsunto'	[ntsú-ntɔʔɔ]	Tawah	[tən-wá]
Ntum	[ntúm]	Tayim (Metta origin)	[táyim]
Ntummyam	[ntúm-ɲám]	Tazong	[tən-azɔŋ]
Nwancha	[ŋwáʔatsá]	Tibui (Batibo origin)	[tɪbɪ]
Nwemiyere (Bafut origin)	[wəmɪyɛrɛ]	Tikum	[tɪ - ɪkum]
Nyamngoh	[ɲám-ŋɔʔə]	Timah	[tɪ - máʔa]
Nyamukong	[ɲá-mɪkɔŋ]	Tizhibong	[tɪʒɪ - ɪbɔŋ]
Nyenghang	[ɲên-aghán]	Tsi	[tsɪ]
Sahningong	[sáʔanɪgɔŋ]	Tsineh	[tsɪ-nê]
Samba	[àsamba / sambá]	Tukah	[tùkâ]
Sandjo	[àsən-ndzɔ]	Tuma	[tùm]
Shwiri	[ʃwɪr]	Tumabudzong	[tùmə-bɪdzɔŋ]
Siri	[sɪrɪ]	Tumanjong	[tùmə-ndzɔŋ]
Sonde	[sɔndê]	Wangia	[wəŋgyá]
Tabah	[tən-abaʔa]	Wankah	[wə-ŋkaʔa]
Tabien	[tən-abyɛn]	Wanki	[wə-ŋkyi(ɛ)]
Tabufor	[tən-bɪfɔ]	Wara	[wàr]
Tadzong	[tən-azɔŋ]	Zama	[zám]
Takinsiri	[təkɪŋsɪrɪ]	Zamcho	[zàmtsɔ]
Tamafor	[tàmâ-ɪfɔ]	Zamgang	[zámŋgaŋ]
Tamambang	[tən-mamban]	Zee	[zí]
Tamankag	[tàmâ-ŋkagɪ]		
Tamantsore	[tàmâ-ntsor]		

Fig.18 :

P/ N'é zô (Body parts)





Notes

- 1 If the reference is 'yesterday', the past indicator 'k̄' must be used. With 'tomorrow', we use the future marker 'm̄' or 'ló'.
- 2 See footnote 100 above.
- 3 Ditto

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"There is a wealth of knowledge in this book. The document is also well researched and will certainly be a wonderful resource for and on the Mankon society."

Dr Ayu'nwi N. Neba, Lecturer in Linguistics and English Language, University of Buea, Cameroon

This book is a descriptive and documentary analysis of the Mankon I-language and E-language mirrored through aspects of history, geography, flora and fauna. These aspects manifest in the taxonomic nomenclatures attributed to referents in society. Because these referents were hitherto transmitted orally from generation to generation, the author has painstakingly analysed and documented aspects of Mankon culture for posterity. The work focuses in particular on Mankon proverbs for insights into the structure and function of the language. As a vehicle of communication, language plays a primordial role in encoding and decoding 'metalinguistic' data. Through thorough scientific linguistic universals and principals, Chi Che has proposed orthography for Mankon pedagogy that is simple, tenable and practicable. This book is the answer to the international clarion call for societies to analyse and document their endangered indigenous cultures. Schools, linguists, sociolinguists, anthropologists, historians and others will find this book especially useful.

Christopher Chi Che was born in July 1964 in Mankon, Cameroon. After graduating from the then University of Yaounde and the Higher Teachers' Training College, he taught English Language and Literature in various schools of Cameroon. He currently serves as Regional Pedagogic Inspector of English in the West Region of Cameroon. He is greatly interested in research in the area of endangered indigenous languages and cultures. He has several books and articles in the area of secondary school English Language and Literature in English.



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